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JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN:
A
SERIES OF LETTERS
ON THE
CONTROVERSY
BETWEEN
JEWS AND CHRISTIANS;
COMPRISING
THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCTRINES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY JOSEPH SAMUEL C. F. FREY,
AUTHOR OF A HEBREW GRAMMAR, A HEBREW, LATIN, AND ENGLISH DICTIONARY,
AND EDITOR OF VANDER HOOCHT'S HEBREW BIBLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

.....
"These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the
Son of God."—JOHN.

.....
SECOND EDITION.
.....

NEW-YORK:

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PREFACE

DEAR READER,

As you may probably have seen my narrative, or history of my own life, several editions of which have been published both in England and in this country, I shall not say any thing respecting myself except what may be necessary as a key to the following letters. In the year 1771 I was born in Germany, of Jewish parents, and brought up in the strict observance of all the religious ceremonies of my forefathers. I was early educated for the office of Rabbi, which I sustained afterward, together with the office of Reader in the synagogue, &c. for seven years. At the age of 25, being convinced that Jesus is the Messiah, I left my father's house and kindred, and publicly professed the Christian religion. In 1799 I devoted myself to the work of a missionary, and commenced the preparatory studies in the missionary seminary at Berlin, Prussia, and pursued it afterwards more fully in England. In 1805 I commenced my missionary labors in London, and continued the same until 1816, when I removed with my family to this country, where I became the pastor of a congregation in the city of New-York. In 1823 I resigned my pastoral charge, and engaged as agent for the "American Society for Meliorating the condition of the Jews" until 1828. Since that period I have spent much of my time in traveling and preaching the glorious Gospel of the blessed God through the greater

part of the United States: Thus far the Lord has brought me on, and I can truly say goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, for which I desire to bless his holy name.

The substance of the following letters constituted my lectures to my Jewish brethren in London, and many of them I have preached in several cities in Great Britain, in the city of New-York, and Charleston, S. C. &c. and to the praise of Him "from whom cometh every good gift," I can say, upon good evidence, that they have met with general approbation, and frequently solicited for publication. For the last twenty years I have revised and enlarged these lectures repeatedly, and carefully compared them with the sacred Scriptures, with the writings of our ancient and modern Rabbins, and with the most approved works of Christian divines; and believe them to contain the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, my blessed Lord and Savior.

Now I am old and grey-headed, and cannot expect to have many more days to labor in the vineyard of my Lord, I have endeavored to prepare them for the press to the best of my poor abilities, and now humbly submit them to the public, that after I shall be dead, and gone to rest with my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, I may yet, by these letters, teach transgressors the way of salvation through the once crucified, and now exalted, Redeemer, and confirm believers in the all-important truth, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, the Son of the living God.

With respect to the style and composition of this work, I am perfectly aware that the critic will find many imperfections, but hope the candid reader will please to bear in mind that the English is not my native tongue; and ever

since I commenced speaking it, I have been actively and constantly engaged in the work of the Lord, which has not left me as much time as I could have wished to attend more strictly to the rules of rhetoric, and therefore humbly request the reader to attend more to the matter than to the style and composition of the following letters.

One object which I have constantly kept in view is, to show that the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion are neither "cunningly devised fables," nor "the inventions of modern priestcraft," but that they have been revealed in the Old Testament, and believed by the ancient people of God, and have been taught by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament, only in a fuller and clearer manner.

I have addressed these letters to Benjamin, my *own* brother, merely as a *representative* of all my Jewish brethren, concerning whom I can adopt the language of the great apostle of the Gentiles, if not as *feelingly*, yet I trust as *sincerely*, in declaring, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, (for I *did* wish that myself were accursed from Christ,*) for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the

* Perhaps few passages have been considered more difficult to be understood than this. But the mind of the apostle may be easily known; 1. if the second and third verses are read without the clause "for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ;" 2dly. let the original word *Euchomén*, the imperfect middle voice, be translated I *did* wish, instead of I "*could*," i. e. before my conversion; 3dly. let this sentence be read in a parenthesis, as a reason why Paul felt and expressed greater sympathy for his brethren than any other of the apostles did. As if he had said, "they never hated Christ as I did; for before my conversion I was as bad as my unbelieving brethren are. For like them I did wish myself accursed from

flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. 9: 1-5. Neither are these letters written for the Jews only, but also for Christians of every denomination. The variety of truth contained in them is made so plain, and is in itself so interesting and important, that I hope the work will prove exceedingly useful as a companion in Bible classes, a text book to candidates for the Gospel ministry, and a complete system of divinity for pious families.

Firmly believing that "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase," and that "it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord," I earnestly pray that the Lord in infinite mercy may make the truths contained in the following letters "the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation to every" reader, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Christ; i. e. I abhorred the idea of believing in him, or as being considered one of his disciples; and therefore, by sad experience, I can sympathize with them more than others." He who has just been rescued from a dangerous fit of sickness feels more for a sick person than he who never knew what sickness means. Hence even the Son of God himself needed to be tempted and tried, that he might be able to succor them that are tempted.

THE AUTHOR.

Brooklyn, New-York, March, 1835.

PART I.

THE NECESSITY OF A MEDIATOR.

Letter I.

INTRODUCTION.

My dearly beloved Brother Benjamin,

§ 1. How greatly did my heart rejoice, when, after the lapse of so many years of separation and silence, I was favored with your affectionate letter. My feelings, on perusing it, cannot be expressed. Like my namesake, *Joseph* of old, I fell, in imagination, "upon my dear *Benjamin's* neck, and wept" tears of joy; Gen. 45: 14. I thank my God, who hath preserved your life, removed your prejudices, and inclined your heart to inquire after the truth.

§ 2. You express a great desire to know "the reasons for my believing the Christian religion." After mature deliberation, and much prayer to God, and relying on the aid of the *Ruach Hakkodesh*, Holy Spirit, I have resolved to comply with your request. But be assured that no other consideration but to gratify you, and the hope that it may please God to make it a blessing to your precious soul, would have led me to undertake this work. For, although I can adopt the language and sentiment of one of our brethren of the tribe of Benjamin, that "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek;" Rom. 1: 16; and though I am commanded by one of the inspired apostles of my blessed Savior, "to be ready *always* to give an answer to *every man* that asketh for a reason of my hope;" and although I have studied *these subjects* for *many years*, and *preached* on them *often* yet, such is the

conviction of my imperfections in *style, composition, &c.* that diffidence would have led me to withhold them *still* from appearing in *print*, as I have done on former occasions, as you will perceive by the following extract from the fourth Report of the London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, page 3. "The lectures to the Jews, by Mr. Frey, which form so important and prominent a feature in the operations of the Society, have been continued at the Jews' Chapel, and of them it is not saying too much, to observe, that subjects have been so judiciously chosen, and so admirably treated by him, especially in the elucidation and application of the doctrines and discipline of the Jews, in exposing the fallacious reasoning of the Hebrew doctors, and in enforcing the grand truths of Christianity, that these discourses will long be remembered with delight and satisfaction by those who have heard them. Your Committee regret that Mr. Frey's *diffidence* has led him (perhaps somewhat too pertinaciously) to resist their repeated applications to prepare several of these lectures for the press." Similar applications have been made by friends in this country, as well as in England.

§ 3. The subject on which you solicit information, is, of all others, the most interesting. It is that by which God has distinguished mankind from, and elevated them above, all other creatures in our world, endowing them with rational and moral faculties *capable* of religious notions and sentiments. Nor can it be supposed that God, who instructed our first parents in the useful knowledge they possessed, would neglect to *communicate* to them the knowledge of religion. Hence, notwithstanding the many changes and corruptions which have been introduced, with respect to the *nature* of religion, still, the *necessity* and *importance* of it are acknowledged by all nations.

We find no human society who have not their religious opinions and sentiments; and some of the most uncivilized and barbarous nations are often the most zealous and con-

scientious in the observance of their rites and ceremonies.

§ 4. You, my dear brother, have no doubt, like myself, felt thankful to God for blessing us with parents, who, like Abraham our father, commanded their children that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; yet it is a deplorable fact, that they never taught us wherein *true religion consists*. With shame I confess to you, that for many years all the ideas I had on this important subject centred in this: that I must live and die as a Jew, professing and observing what my parents did, without even expressing or harboring a doubt respecting the truth, propriety, or utility of their creed.

How often have I been told, by Christians as well as Jews, "that for a person to change the religion in which he was born and brought up, is the worst thing he can do, and is a sure evidence of his being a bad man." This sentiment, however, is contrary to Scripture and reason. You, my dear brother, as well as any other one of our nation, would certainly be shocked at the very thought that our father Abraham, who renounced the idolatrous religion of his fathers, and worshipped the true God, "did the worst thing a man could do, and thereby evinced himself to be a bad man." Besides, if his conduct was blamable, the blame falls on Jehovah, whose express command was the rule of his conduct. And dare any one, who is called by the name of Jesus, assert such a principle? Did not he commission his apostles and ministers to preach his Gospel to every nation; to open their blind eyes; and to turn them from darkness to light; from their dumb idols, to serve the living and true God? If a Jew or a Gentile, for renouncing the religion of his fathers, and believing in Jesus Christ, be blamable, the blame belongs to Jesus, who commands all to believe in him, and not to him who obeys this divine command. Further, is it not universally considered contrary to reason, to continue in the erroneous belief and practice of our forefathers, in matters of a tem-

porary or worldly nature. The husbandman, the mariner, the mechanic, the artist, the lawyer, and the statesman, each and every one considers it his duty and privilege to depart from the old mistaken views, principles, modes, and manners of his forefathers, and to follow the more correct, improved, and useful ideas and principles of the present day: and why should we not much more renounce the religious errors of our forefathers, and embrace the true religion of the Bible? Surely it is of infinitely greater importance to secure our spiritual and eternal happiness, than to improve our temporal and worldly circumstances. For "what is a man profited," saith the Lord of heaven and earth, "if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16 : 26. However unscriptural and unreasonable this maxim is, alas! it is very common. In my travels, during the last forty years, which have been very frequent and extensive, both in Germany, my native country, in Britain, and in these United States, I have observed, with much grief and sorrow of heart, that this maxim is the foundation of the religious creeds of mankind in general, until the Spirit of God impresses on their hearts the importance of caring for their precious and immortal souls. Few can assign a better reason why they are heathens, Mahomedans, Jews, or Christians, than that their forefathers had been of the same persuasion. O, Christian reader! what is the foundation of your hope? why are you a Christian and not a Jew? why a Protestant and not a Roman Catholic? why an Episcopalian or a Presbyterian, &c. &c. Is it because, like the noble Bereans, you have examined the Scriptures and built upon the foundation that God has laid therein; or have you followed the mere example of your forefathers? Remember, that religion is a *personal* thing, and that you and I must very soon appear at the bar of Almighty God, and be either acquitted or condemned, after being tried and judged, not by the peculiar creed of

our parents, but by his revealed will, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

§ 5. Excuse this digression, dear *Benjamin*; consider how uncertain and dangerous was the maxim by which I was thus guided. For while we cannot doubt the *sincerity* of our dear parents, as it respects their religious creed, yet surely there was a possibility of their being *mistaken*. Now, suppose I had discovered that they had been really and radically mistaken in their religious views, would it not have been as much my duty to renounce error, and to embrace the truth, as it was the duty of our venerable father Abraham to leave the idolatrous religion of his parents.

§ 6. But probably you will reply, that Abraham had an express command from God. This is true; and so had I. Not, indeed, in the same mode of communication; yet no less clear and certain. "For we have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." And certainly we are no less bound to believe and obey what God has said in his written word, than the patriarchs were bound to believe and obey what he made known to them in dreams and in visions. But before I point out unto you those portions of the sacred Scriptures which have convinced me of the truth of the *Christian* religion, I will show you why I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God.

§ 7. When it had pleased the Lord, in his wise and holy providence, to bring me into company with a Christian fellow traveler, (see my Narrative, chap. 2,) who asserted that the promised Messiah had already come, and that Jesus of Nazareth, whom our fathers crucified, was that Messiah; in a moment, as it were, the foundation of my creed was shaken, my mind was filled with doubts, and I was exceedingly anxious to know whether Jesus was indeed the Christ. I now began to read the Scriptures of the Old Testament, to see *what kind* of a Messiah God had promised to our

fathers. How great was my surprise when I read those clear and striking descriptions of the prophet, concerning the person, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, which I had never seen or heard before. For you well know, my dear Benjamin, that the 53d chap. of Isaiah, the ~~19th~~ chap. of Daniel, and many other parts of the writings of the prophets, are not included in the *Haphtoreth*, (i. e. the portions selected to be read in the Synagogue,) nor are they read by many in private. (Narrative, chap. 1.)

§ 8. I now eagerly desired to know whether all that had been foretold by the prophets, had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; I therefore procured a copy of the New Testament, the first I ever touched; for you remember how often we were cautioned against it, and told that "to touch a New Testament was as defiling as to touch a swine." I read the Gospels twice over. All was new and unheard of before; many things appeared very dark and mysterious, and I had none to ask for information, except the minister, my spiritual guide, but to whom I could not go as often as I wanted explanations. Under these discouraging circumstances the words of my blessed Savior were of great use to me. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John, 13 : 7. It is impossible, my dear brother, to describe my astonishment in reading the history of my blessed Lord. How different is his *real* character from that *blasphemous* account of him called *Toldoth Jeshu*, which we were in the habit of reading every year on the evening before Christmas-day. Truly he is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely, and as the poet said :

" All human beauties, all divine,
" In my beloved meet and shine ;
" His worth, if all the nations knew,
" Sure the whole world would love him too."

I was equally surprised to find the most minute predictions fulfilled in Jesus. My *judgment* was soon convinced that

he was the promised Messiah, and I began to rejoice in the hope of glory.

§ 9. But alas! this happy state and frame of mind did not continue very long. It was suggested that the New Testament was not the word of God. For some time I was much perplexed and greatly cast down. The minister, one day, perceiving that I groaned under some burden, inquired into the cause of it. I first hesitated, for fear of giving offence, but his kind and affectionate conduct removed my apprehensions, and I told him my doubts about the truth and authenticity of the New Testament. He then asked, "Do you believe the Old Testament to be the word of God?" "Yes," said I. "What is the reason," said he, "that you believe it to be the word of God? How do you know that it is not a forgery?" "Because," said I, "my parents always believed it, and all the Jews believe it." "Well," replied he, "if that be a sufficient and satisfactory reason, then the New Testament is the word of God too, for all Christians believe it to be so. But," said he, "there are other proofs by which we may know whether a book is a *divine revelation* or not." By this pious and good man I was first instructed in the evidences of the Old and New Testament.

§ 10. This subject is, of all others, the most important, and yet as strangely neglected. Whatever instructions may be derived from the volumes of nature and providence, it is the Bible, and the Bible, only, that can give a satisfactory answer to the serious and anxious inquiry, "what shall I do to be saved?" And it is because so few study the *evidences* of the Bible, that so many fall into dangerous errors, or into open infidelity. I will, therefore, in my next letter, give you some general ideas on the subject of a divine revelation, and afterward state the leading evidences that prove the Bible to be the word of God.

Letter II.**OBSERVATIONS ON DIVINE REVELATION.**

Dear Brother,

§ 1. Agreeably to my promise, I shall now make a few general remarks respecting a divine revelation. I stated in my last that the minister who gave me the first instructions in the Christian religion pointed out to me the evidences of a divine revelation, which were then of great use to me. However, I had a still better opportunity afterward of examining that subject more extensively, and more carefully, in the Missionary Seminary, under the care of the late Rev. Dr. Bogue, at Gosport, in England. Permit me, my dear Benjamin, to embrace this opportunity of publicly acknowledging the kind providence of God, and of thanking the directors of the London Missionary Society, for sending and supporting me in their Seminary, where it pleased my dear Lord and Savior further to enlighten my mind, to rectify my judgment, and to establish my heart in the truth of the Gospel by the parental and judicious instructions of my ever-revered tutor, who lately entered his rest, after having spent a life of more than threescore years and ten in the most laborious, indefatigable, and useful manner. To return to our subject, the doctor's M. S. lectures on "divine revelation," and his printed essay on the "divine authority of the New Testament," exceed all I ever met with on the subject.

§ 2. In treating on this subject, one is not at a loss what to say or to write, but how to arrange the mass of matter crowded at once into the mind. I need not inform you, my brother, that it is *possible* for God to make known to men

many things which, otherwise, they could not have known. However wise men may be, still God is infinitely wiser. We are but creatures of a day, that know nothing, whilst his wisdom and knowledge are past finding out. His power too is almighty. He can never be at a loss for means to accomplish whatever he may wish to have done. For "he that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teaches men knowledge, shall he not know?" He who has endowed us with power and ability to signify and communicate to others our intentions, desires, and commands, cannot be deficient in ability to make us acquainted with his own will and mind. To deny God such an ability is as foolish and sinful as to deny his very existence.

§ 3. Nor shall I need many arguments to convince you of the *necessity* of a divine revelation. Whatever may have been the knowledge of our first parents before they sinned, it is very evident that since their fall a new revelation became necessary. Without it they and their posterity must have remained blind, wretched, and miserable. To enjoy true happiness we need a correct knowledge of God, of the way of deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and of the nature and certainty of a future state. You have, no doubt, heard of the boasted *light of nature*, called "reason, sentiment, moral sense, a spark or monitor within," Pray, wherein does it consist? Where is it to be found? What has it effected in the world? Among the three hundred millions of the inhabitants of China, have any of them ever fanned up this "spark" into a flame sufficiently clear to lead them from their dumb idols to serve the living God? Has the "monitor within" ever taught them how to perform their duty, and brought them to realize true happiness? Alas! generation after generation have lived "without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world." And if this be the state of the ingenious and civilized Chinese, who have a knowledge of, and intercourse with, those

who have long enjoyed a divine revelation, what can be expected from the rest of the heathen nations who have, perhaps, never heard of the Bible, or the God of the Bible? A slight acquaintance with history assures us that it is not more true that God, in the beginning, made man in *his* own (holy) image, and after *his* own (glorious and blessed) likeness, than that men have made their gods in *their* own depraved image, and after their own guilty likeness. Whilst our blessed God is glorious in holiness, perfectly free from every blemish, and possessed of every excellency, infinite and unchangeable, their gods gloried in their shame, and are represented as having committed every crime with greediness. Now, what else could be expected from the worshippers of such gods, or from the subjects of such sovereigns, than what is exhibited in the history of the worship and wars of the enlightened Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, viz. that they found pleasure in doing that which was most vile, horrid, hurtful, and unnatural. This awful description of the historian is confirmed by the testimony of the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles, in his Epistle addressed to the church at Rome, the capital of the world. Rom. 1 : 18-32. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to

uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Nor hath any nation since grown wiser or better where the enlightening, quickening, and fructifying beams of the Sun of Righteousness have not yet shone. Among them the picture drawn by the pencil of inspiration will be found to be not overcharged, that "their understanding is darkness itself, their judgment perverse, their memory treacherous, their will, enmity against God, their affections earthly, sensual, and devilish, and their members the members of unrighteousness." Many of the wisest heathen have acknowledged that human nature, in its present vile and corrupt state, could never have been made so by a wise, holy, and benevolent God; but that, by some means or other, some change for the worse must have taken place; but *how* or *when* this change took place they could not tell, much less could they

find out a way to restore men to holiness or happiness. Their wisest philosophers, too, have tried to reform the world; but their attempts have been as fruitless as if they had attempted to change the Ethiopian's skin or the leopard's spots. The words of my blessed Savior are truly applicable to them: "They be blind leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matt. 15 : 14. In the next place: How to obtain the pardon of sin, and to be reconciled to God, is another important defect of the light of nature, and makes a divine revelation desirable and necessary. Such is the importance of the pardon of sin, that no man can be blessed without it, nor miserable with it. David, the royal psalmist, expressed himself thus: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit is no guile." Ps. 32 : 1, 2. And the Lord of David hath said, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16 : 26. The assurance of the divine favor is the very essence of happiness, and the life of religion. Who would not join in the choice of the king of Israel, saying: "There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart more than in the time that their corn and wine increased." Ps. 4 : 6, 7. That neither repentance, &c. &c. or any thing we can do, is of any avail in this respect, I shall show in a future letter, nor shall I add any more on this head.

§ 4. It might, indeed, be considered more rational to question God's willingness—whether He would condescend to give a new revelation to his guilty and ungrateful creatures, than to doubt its necessity. Yea, doubtless, great has often been the trembling apprehension of many a poor sinner, when brought to a sense of his guilty and helpless condition. From this fear, however, he will be relieved, by con-

sidering first, God's benevolent conduct towards men to promote their present happiness; the plentiful provision he hath made in nature to supply all our wants in health and in sickness, and his constant care and protection over us. Hence, all nations have not only desired, but also pretended to divine revelations, and have received them on very slender proofs. In the next place, he will be delivered from his fears, when he examines the characters or evidences of that revelation which God has graciously given unto us. This shall be the subject of our next letter.

Letter III.

EVIDENCES OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

Dear Benjamin,

§ 1. Since writing to you my last letter, I remembered to have made use of the expression, the "Scriptures of the Old and New Testament." Now it is probable you may be as much at a loss to know the reason why the Scriptures are called a *Testament*, as I was when first I began to investigate the truth of Christianity. Indeed, there are many other religious expressions used among Christians which a Jew seldom hears, and which even many among Christians themselves use frequently in an improper sense. Thus in your very question you use the expression why I believe in the "Christian religion;" as if that was a *new* religion; or as if, by believing what Christians believe, I must necessarily have departed from the religion which God gave to our fathers. Now I shall have occasion to show hereafter that, strictly speaking, the Christian religion

and the Jewish religion are the same in *doctrines*, &c. though different in *dispensations*. The difference of my creed from that of Abraham, Moses, David, &c. consists only in this: they looked for the coming of a promised Messiah—I believe that the Messiah hath come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. I shall, therefore, briefly explain all such technical terms as may come in my way, and begin now, by showing the reason why the Scriptures are called the *Old* and *New Testament*.

§ 2. The revelation which God gave unto men, and which hath been preserved unto our day, is contained in one book, called, by way of distinction, the “Bible.” This Bible is divided into two general parts; the first is called the *Old Testament*, and comprises the books which our people call *Tenach*, that is, *Torah*, the Law, *Neviim*, the Prophets; *uchesarim*, the Psalms or Hagiography; and the other part is called the *New Testament*, containing the Gospels, or history of Christ; the Acts and Epistles of his apostles, and the Revelation to St. John. A *Testament* supposes a testator who has made known his will, and directed what is to be done after his death; and his will or testament is of no force, until both his death hath taken place, and his will proved to be genuine and true. Such a testator is the Messiah, who, immediately after the fall of Adam, made known the way and method in which sinners were to be saved. The whole of which was comprised in the promise made to our first parents, “that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent,” Gen. 3 : 15, and was confirmed “*typically*” by the death of a sacrifice. This promise contained the whole substance and essence of the covenant of grace. All those promises given afterwards, on various occasions, were but explanations and confirmations of it. And though the death of the Messiah did not take place till the fullness of time, yet its efficacy, as the procuring cause of the remission of sins and eternal life, extends back to the entrance of sin, as well as forward to

the end of time. Now all that was written before the birth of Messiah is called *Old*, and all that was written after his ascension to glory is called *New Testament*. Such is the reason generally assigned for calling the Bible a testament. Perhaps it would have been more correct to have used the word *covenant*, instead of testament. Immediately after the fall, the Messiah *made known* the gracious covenant by which sinners were to be saved. But the covenant required a sacrifice to ratify and confirm it. No other sacrifice was sufficient but that of the Messiah. Sacrifices were then instituted and offered typically, until Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, took away the sin of the world by the sacrifice of himself. But this subject must be stated more fully hereafter.

§ 3. We return to the subject in hand, to ascertain whether the Bible be a divine revelation. This may be done, *first*, by examining the Bible itself; and *secondly*, by the character and circumstances of those who professed to have received it from God, and to have written it by his direction and assistance. The former we will call *internal*, and the latter *external* evidence.

I have, my dear Benjamin, carefully and prayerfully examined the *matter*, the *style*, the *harmony*, and the *design* of the Bible, and am perfectly satisfied that they are such as might reasonably be expected from a book sent from God to men. The sacred Scriptures bear the image of their divine Author. As the writings of mere men, in their present state, often partake of their ignorance, errors, and corruption; and as the streams partake of the nature of their fountains, so does the Holy Bible partake of the perfection of its Author, and the purity of its sources. It is the offspring of the "only wise God," and came down from the "Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

§ 4. The more I read the Bible, the more I am led to admire the matter it contains. Here is every thing revealed

that might be expected, and nothing to the contrary. Every thing relative to the character, the law, and the government of God, is described in perfect harmony with the ideas we derive from the light of nature, and the defects of the latter are abundantly supplied in the Bible. Man's original glorious and happy state, his present miserable and helpless condition; the circumstances which produced this awful change, and the remedy provided, able to restore us to felicity far exceeding our primitive estate, are here made known, perfectly consistent with reason, though far above its comprehension. All the doubts and difficulties respecting the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the general judgment, are removed by the light of divine revelation. The providence of God is asserted, and its apparent difficulties are reconciled. The duties which the Bible enjoins, both towards God and man, are a reasonable service, and are accompanied by suitable rewards and punishments. The histories of the Bible are abundantly confirmed by other historians.

§ 5. The Bible further differs from all other books, in its remarkable style. The majesty, the authority, the sublimity, the imagery, &c. of the Holy Scriptures, exceed all that ever hath been admired in the style of mere human composition. The language of the Scriptures is pure and holy, chaste and clear; free from all levity and obscenity, and from every thing that might be offensive to the ear of the chaste and pious. Some things are plain and easy, others hard and difficult to be understood. Some places are so shallow that a "lamb may wade, others so deep that an elephant must swim." Here is milk for babes, and meat for the strong. Here are plain truths to instruct and encourage the humble inquirer; and mysteries to humble and mortify the proud and self-conceited.

§ 6. The harmony of the things revealed in the Bible is another of its peculiar excellencies. The doctrines, though delivered at sundry times, and in divers manners,

yet are all of a piece; not yea and nay, no discord or disagreement. The two Testaments are like the two cherubims over the mercy-seat, which were of one beaten piece, were exactly alike, and looked to one another, and both to the mercy-seat, a type of the Messiah, who is the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The apostles of Christ said no other things than what Moses and the prophets had foretold should come to pass. The end and design for which the Bible was made known, shows it worthy of its divine Author.

§ 7. The Holy Scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. "They were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Such was the sentiment of the apostles of Christ, of the design and influence of the Scriptures. Nor did the royal Psalmist set a less value upon them, though he had but a small portion of them. How beautiful and just is his description of the superior excellency and usefulness of divine revelation over the light of nature. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Ps. 19: 7-11. Much more might be said on the internal evidences; but I will close the subject in the words of an eminent writer: "The sacred Scriptures open to us the mysteries of the creation; the nature of God, angels, and man; the immortality of the soul; the end for which he is made; the origin and

connection of moral and natural evil; the vanity of this world and the glory of the next. Here we see inspired shepherds, tradesmen, and fishermen surpassing as much the greatest philosophers as these did the herd of mankind, both in meekness of wisdom and sublimity of doctrine. Here we admire the purest morality in the world, agreeable to the dictates of sound reason, confirmed by the writings which God has placed for himself in our breast, and exemplified in the lives of men of like passions as ourselves. Here we discover a vein of ecclesiastical history and theological truths consistently running through a collection of sixty-six different books, written by various authors, in different languages, during a period of above 1500 years. Here we find, as in a deep and pure spring, all the genuine drops and streams of spiritual knowledge which can possibly be met with in the largest libraries. Here the workings of the human heart are described in a manner that demonstrates the inspiration of the Searcher of hearts. Here we have a particular account of all our spiritual maladies, with their various symptoms, and the method of a certain cure; a cure that has been witnessed by multitudes of martyrs and departed saints, and is now enjoyed by thousands of good men, who would account it an honor to seal the truth of the Scriptures with their own blood. Here you meet with the noblest strains of penitential and joyous devotions, adapted to the dispositions and states of all travelers to Zion. And here you read those awful threatenings and cheering promises which are daily fulfilled in the consciences of men, to the admiration of believers and the astonishment of attentive infidels."

" O may these heavenly pages be

" My ever dear delight;

" And still new beauties may I see,

" And still increase in light."

Letter IV.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. I will proceed now to state the *external* evidence: The character of the penman will be the first that invites our attention. In comparing their lives with the best and wisest men that ever lived; they appear to excell them in piety, zeal, and usefulness, as much as the sun in the firmament outshines all other luminaries, though himself is not without a spot. These holy men of God declared themselves to be inspired, for they tell us that they had not received cunningly devised fables, but that the word of the Lord came unto them at such a time, and when they spake it is, "Thus saith the Lord." Now, if the sacred Scriptures are not true, then these writers must either have been deceived themselves, or they must have wilfully tried to act the vilest part of impostors. But neither of these can be the case. As for the first, neither Moses nor the prophets, neither the evangelists nor the apostles could be *mistaken*. Their own senses were witness to the facts they relate; and the memorials which were immediately instituted, and constantly observed, in commemoration of those facts, are a standing monument of their truth and reality. Could Moses be deceived when he tells us that he wrought miracles in Egypt, turning the water into blood, filling the land with thick darkness for the space of three days, and that the Lord slew every first-born, from the king on the throne to the captive in the dungeon? Was it possible for him to deceive the people? Could he persuade 600,000 Israelites that they all came out of Egypt in haste, in one night, carrying their dough upon their shoulders; that they all passed

through the Red Sea on dry foot, and saw their enemies dead on the shore? Could he make them believe, that for the space of 40 years they were daily supplied with manna from heaven, and with water out of a rock, which followed them through the wilderness? If these facts had not been true, could Moses have imposed upon the people such memorials as the institution of the Passover, the pot of manna, the budding rod, the weekly Sabbath, the monthly festivals, and the yearly sacrifices? Of a similar nature are the facts related in the New Testament, and confirmed by the institutions of baptism and the Lord's supper. Now, if these things had been false, the writers could by no means pretend an involuntary mistake, but must, in the most criminal and aggravated sense, be found false witnesses of God. But to charge them with so heinous a crime is most unreasonable, if we consider their character, which will clearly show that they are worthy of regard, and will leave no room to imagine that they intended to deceive.

§ 2. The writers of the sacred Scriptures were generally men of common education, taken from their daily avocations as shepherds, fishermen, &c.; their writings were far above their capacity, both as to matter and manner, and could only have flowed from the pen of inspiration. They were pious, humble, and faithful historians. They concealed not their own failings and infirmities. Moses relates his own weakness and inadvertencies, and omits not the blemishes of his family. David did not conceal his awful crimes of adultery and murder. Jonah informs us of his passionate temper in telling the Lord, "I do well to be angry to death." Peter denied his Lord and Master; and Paul's sharp contention with Barnabas is faithfully recorded. Surely this is not the manner of proud and unrenewed historians. Their pen was guided by the love of truth.

§ 3. Their motives, too, will bear the strictest scrutiny. They were pure, benevolent, and disinterested. Neither the hope of gain, the desire of honor, nor the gratification of

pleasure, had any influence upon their conduct. Moses, the servant of the most high God, "when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Yea, when the Lord himself proposed to destroy Israel, and to make him a great nation, he refused, preferring the public good of the people to his own advantage. The disciples of Jesus in like manner forsook all and followed their Master, "who had not where to lay his head," and esteemed it an honor to be counted worthy to suffer hunger and thirst, revilings and persecutions, imprisonment and death, in the cause of their dear Lord and Savior.

§ 4. It is further worthy of our notice, that the writers of the sacred Scriptures were many, and lived at such distance of time and place from each other, that, had they been impostors, it would have been impracticable for them to contrive and carry on a forgery without being detected: and when we consider; on the one hand, the great variety of their natural capacities, of their modes of education, and of their occupations and interest; and on the other hand, the astonishing and unparalleled harmony in the doctrines they delivered, in the precepts they enjoined, and in the arguments and sanctions by which these precepts are enforced; we are constrained to acknowledge the divine agency by which this agreement was produced. "Did so many and such marks of their veracity ever meet in any other authors?"

§ 5. Next to the character of the penmen, we will consider the miracles they wrought in confirmation of the truths they delivered. There can be no stronger evidence of a divine mission than this. Hence, when the Lord sent Moses, he expected that Pharaoh would ask for a miracle in proof of his mission, and the Lord directed him what to

do. Ex. 7 : 9. For the same reason the Lord Jesus Christ frequently appealed to his miracles as a proof of his mission. The miracles wrought by Moses and the prophets, by Christ and his apostles, were witnessed by hundreds and thousands of enemies as well as friends. As these were *real* miracles, and of course contrary to the laws of nature, they could not be wrought but by the power of the God of nature ; but the God of nature, who is the God of eternal and unchangeable truth, would never have lent his power to sanction and establish the character of an impostor, or to confirm a lie. Nor ought it to be forgotten that at the very time when the authenticity of these miracles was attested by thousands of living witnesses, religious rites were instituted to perpetuate that authenticity. Some of these institutions I have already noticed.

§ 6. Another evidence in favor of the Bible, as a divine revelation, arises from the variety of prophecies which it contains ; many of which have already been almost exactly confirmed by occurrence of the events predicted. As none can know the certainty of future events but the omniscient God, who seeth the end from the beginning, so none can foretell them but those to whom he is pleased to reveal them. Every distinct prophecy, therefore, when accomplished, is an evidence of the truth of those who delivered it. Hence the Lord Jesus Christ informed his disciples of the treacherous conduct that one of them would be guilty of, and told them that the reason why he mentioned it was to confirm their faith. John, 13 : 19. " I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that *I am*," i. e. not a *mere* man, but Jehovah, the omniscient God. Now, my dear brother, allow me to mention but a few out of the many prophecies which have already been fulfilled, and are so many proofs that those who delivered them were inspired by God. Isaiah, ch. 44 : 28, mentioned Cyrus by name, who would issue a decree to build Jerusalem, which was fulfilled about 160 years after. Again, the man of God

told Jeroboam that a child should be born unto the house of David, *Josiah* by name, who should defile the altars by burning the bones out of the sepulchres, &c. which was literally fulfilled after 350 years. 1 Kings, 13 : 2. 2 Kings, 23 : 16. In like manner, the variety of circumstances foretold in Dan. ch. 9. to be fulfilled within 70 weeks, or 490 years, have all come to pass. But that which is the most remarkable of all the predictions, is the minute description of the dispersion and preservation of our beloved nation, and the numerous predictions concerning the Messiah. The serious and candid consideration of the former has been the means of convincing infidels of the truth of divine revelation; and the latter has convinced me, and many of our brethren, that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah.

§ 7. But I will proceed to notice the reception which the Bible hath met with, both from the bad and the good, as another proof of its divine origin. It is a remarkable fact, that the more self-conceited, worldly-minded, and wicked people are, the more they neglect, despise, and asperse the sacred Scriptures; and, on the contrary, the more humble and holy, the more they read, admire, and value them. What my blessed Lord said of his disciples is equally true of the Bible. "If it were of the world, the world would love its own; but because it is not of the world, therefore the world hateth it." No book, however, hath had as many friends as the Bible. Vast numbers of wise and good men, through many generations and distant countries, have agreed in receiving the Bible as a divine revelation; many of them have been noticed for seriousness, erudition, penetration, and impartiality in judging of men and things; living and dying they recommended it to all others, as the source of hope, wisdom, and consolation. "Reason itself," says a judicious writer, "dictates that nothing but the plainest matter of fact could induce so many thousands of persecuted and prejudiced Jews to embrace the humbling, self-

denying doctrine of the cross, which they so much despised and abhorred. Nothing but the clearest evidence, arising from undoubted truth, could make multitudes of lawless, luxurious heathens receive, follow, and transmit to posterity the doctrines and writings of the apostles; especially at a time when the vanity of their pretensions to miracles and the gift of tongues could be so easily discovered, had they been impostors, and when the profession of Christianity exposed persons of all ranks to the greatest contempt and most imminent danger."

§ 8. The next thing which merits our attention is the wonderful efficacy of the Bible. The sacred Scriptures, like godliness itself, are profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, i. e. both temporal and spiritual. "In proportion as the Bible has been known, arts and sciences have been cultivated, peace and liberty have been diffused, civil and moral obligation have been attended to. Nations have emerged from ignorance and barbarity; whole communities have been morally reformed; unnatural practices abolished, and wise laws instituted. The spiritual effects of the Scriptures are still more wonderful. They *wound and heal, they kill and make alive, they alarm the careless, direct the lost, support the tempted, strengthen the weak, comfort mourners, and nourish pious souls*. Kings and peasants, conquerors and philosophers, the wise and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, have been brought to the foot of the cross; yea, millions have been enlightened, improved, reformed, and made happy by its influence."

§ 9. I shall close this subject by noticing the remarkable antiquity and wonderful preservation of the Scriptures. The Bible is the most ancient book in the world. It is made venerable by antiquity. No human histories extant reach further than the flood of Noah. But the holy Scriptures relate matter of facts that have been from the beginning of the world; yea, they reveal transactions which have taken place in the

eternal counsels of Jehovah. The oracles of God, like the Messiah, are the unspeakable gift of God, and the peculiar care of his providence. The Bible has never wanted its enemies to hate and oppose it; and, if possible, to banish it from the face of the earth. But as the children of Israel in Egypt, the more they were oppressed the more they increased and multiplied; so the sacred *Scriptures*, the more they have been opposed the more they have prevailed. No British and Foreign Bible Society, the mother of innumerable and useful children, was in existence till the close of the last century, when infidels had publicly and triumphantly declared that, after a few years, no Bible would be found in the world. It is equally certain that the Bible has been preserved in its purity, without being either mutilated or corrupted. God, whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, hath overruled the enmity which hath existed between Jews and Christians, to produce this important effect. Whilst our people keep, with amazing care, the Old Testament, full of the prophetic history of Jesus Christ, and by that means afford the world a striking proof that the New Testament is true; the Christians, in their turn, show that the Old Testament is abundantly confirmed and explained by the New. My dear Benjamin, I have now endeavored to lay before you, in as brief a manner as possible, the evidence of the Old and New Testament, which has led me to the conclusion, that, if ever there was a divine revelation, the Bible is such; and the only true revelation now in the world. Oh, how thankful ought we to be to have such an inexhaustible treasure put into our hands! And oh, my brother, how shall we escape if we neglect it?

§ 10. Being now fully convinced by the preceding evidence, that the Old Testament is the word of God, and finding, by strict examination, that the New Testament contained still clearer and stronger evidences of a divine revelation, I found myself compelled to receive it as such, and shall, therefore, make no apology for referring to it, in suc-

ceeding letters, for proofs of the Messiahship of Christ Jesus, my Lord and Savior. And may the Lord "open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of his law." Ps. 119 : 18. Farewell.

Letter V.

ON READING THE SCRIPTURES.

Dear Brother,

Hoping that your mind is firmly established in the belief of the Bible as a divine revelation, suffer me now to suggest a few thoughts, to enforce the duty of reading it, and to direct in the performance of that duty.

§ 1. Consider the source from whence the Bible comes. It is a communication from God. With what eagerness and pleasure do men peruse the letters of a beloved friend; and shall we not, with still greater pleasure, read the sacred Scriptures, which are a series of letters coming from our best Friend, who has loved us with an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable love? "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5 : 7, 8. It is the character of the good and the blessed man, that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and that he meditates therein day and night. Should a person receive a letter, and on recognizing the author by its signature, refuse to read it, would it not be considered a high insult and contempt? how much greater, then, is the contempt of God, if we neglect to read the Bible! Such

was the conduct of Ephraim, of which God complains, saying, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing." Hosea, 8 : 12.

§ 2. Reflect, in the next place, on its rich and glorious contents, and say whether the Bible does not deserve to be read. It is the "Magna Charta" of heaven, and shall we be ignorant of our charter? Should the information reach a company of persons, that a certain rich man had just died, and that he had left his whole estate to an individual in that company, would it not be the anxious inquiry of every one, "Is it I?" and if a sight of the will could be obtained, would any one spare either expense or trouble to ascertain whether he was the heir? But the Bible is called a Testament, as I mentioned in a former letter; it contains the will of the testator, the nature of the inheritance, and the characters of the heirs of salvation. Ought not we then to "give all diligence to make our calling sure?" to find out whether we have been "begotten again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven?" How eagerly, diligently, and perseveringly do men dig and search into the bowels of the earth for precious metals, such as silver and gold; and shall not we "search the Scriptures," which contain treasures infinitely greater and better? Here are brought to light the hidden treasures of divine knowledge, of redeeming love, of pardoning mercy, of sanctifying grace, of consolation and support, and of eternal glory beyond the grave. Hence the royal Psalmist and his son Solomon, the wisest of men, although they had but a small portion of the Scriptures, yet valued it as a greater treasure than all the riches of the world; "more to be desired than they than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Ps. 19 : 10. "The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." Prov. 3 : 14. "Wisdom is better than rubies." Prov. 8 : 11.

§ 3. The reading of the Scriptures is strongly recommended to us by the example of the saints in all ages. Their practice is worthy of our imitation. Job informs us that he esteemed the word of the Lord more than his necessary food. Job, 23 : 12. The word of God is as necessary for our souls, as our food is for our bodies. And as our natural life needs daily support, so ought we to hunger and thirst after the word of God, which nourishes and strengthens our spiritual life. David also made it his meditation all the day. And the Holy Ghost has recorded it to the honor of the Bereans, and for our imitation, "that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures *daily*, whether those things were so." Acts, 17 : 11. Oh, my brother, let us follow the worthy example of these our Jewish brethren at Berea. Although they received the word preached by the apostles with a ready mind, without prejudice or opposition, like the other Jews, yet they *daily* searched the Scriptures of the Old Testament, to see whether the apostles' preaching agreed with the writings of Moses and the prophets. Observe further:

§ 4. It is the express command of God, that we should read the Scriptures. We are not left at liberty to choose whether we will receive the Bible or not. God hath made it our duty, as well as our privilege, to search the Scriptures. This command was frequently renewed to our fathers, in the Old Testament. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. 6 : 6, 7. God had just commanded our fathers to love him with all their hearts; now follows the duty of reading the word of God constantly and diligently, morning and evening, by day and by night, at home and abroad, as an evidence of their love to God, and

a most effectual means of nourishing and increasing it. Such was the duty of the whole nation. Now hear the command of Jehovah to the king : " It shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites : and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life." Deut. 17 : 18, 19. Although he might have some copies, yet he *must* write one, and must do it *himself* ; and even if he should know it by heart, he must read it again and again *all* the days of his life. Neither was the general in the army exempted from this duty. When our whole nation was committed to the care of Joshua, the generalissimo, he received the following charge from Jehovah himself : " This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein night and day." Neither rank, nor talent, nor occupation will release us from the duty of reading the Scriptures. The duty was renewed in the days of Isaiah, " Seek ye out of the book of the *Lord*, and read." Isa. 34 : 16. Under the New Testament dispensation we are equally bound to read the word of God. What Jesus said to the Jews, he saith to us also ; " Search the Scriptures," John, 5 : 39 : and the exhortations of the apostle to the churches of old are written for our instruction : " Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph. 6 : 17. " Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Col. 3 : 16.

§ 5. I shall notice only one argument more, to enforce the duty of reading the Bible, viz. the consequences which will follow our conduct. Every command of God is sanctioned by a reward and punishment. David, speaking of the statutes and commandments of the Lord, saith, " in keeping of them there is great reward." Ps. 19 : 11. A proper reading of the Scriptures is calculated to be of great use to us in every condition in life. " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17. The word of God is "a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path." The Scriptures guard us against error, preserve us from temptation, deliver us from sin, support us under affliction, and comfort us in death. As the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of nations, so the leaves of the Holy Bible are for the healing of our spiritual diseases. This tree of knowledge may be touched, and its pleasant fruit may be eaten. Yea, unless we eat thereof, we shall surely die. Those who do not read the Scriptures, not only lose the benefits which they are calculated to confer, but their condemnation will be as aggravated as it will be just. The Scriptures are the clearest light that ever shone. If any man hates it, it is a sure and awful sign that his deeds are evil. We are told that the heathen will be judged for not walking by the light of nature; how much greater must be the punishment of those who refuse to walk by the light of divine revelation! Oh, my dear brother, how shall we escape if we neglect so precious a gift—if we refuse to follow the sure and only guide that leads to the heavenly Canaan?

§ 6. To assist in the performance of this important duty, let me recommend to read the Scriptures with a proper and suitable frame of mind. Let us love and esteem the Bible as the most excellent, and the most useful book, and the perusal of it will become a pleasure. People do not take pains to seek for what they do not value. Thus David loved the word of God more than gold; Job esteemed it more than his necessary food; and an innumerable company of martyrs rather parted with their lives than with the Holy Scriptures. Let us remember that the Bible is the field where the pearl of great price and the hidden treasure are to be found. It is the only chart and compass that can direct us in sailing to the heavenly Jerusalem. The many great and precious promises which it contains,

are cordials in all our distresses, and so many streams of consolation from the inexhaustible fountain of eternal love. Whilst reading God's holy word, our hearts ought to glow with gratitude, and our lips should be filled with praise. If light is pleasant to the eye, how much more pleasant should the light of the Scriptures be to the eye of the mind? How many millions of heathen are still involved in ignorance? "For his judgments they have not known them." Ps. 147 : 20. How many live in the region of death where this bright star of the Bible never appeared, and where the sun of righteousness has never shone? Well might we ask, with admiration and thankfulness, "How is it, Lord, that thou wouldst show thyself to us and not unto the world?"

§ 7. It is further reasonable and important that we should read the Scriptures with humble and teachable dispositions. As humility is the ornament of a Christian, and most lovely in the sight of God, so it is the first and most requisite preparation for reading the Scriptures. To the humble only is the promise made. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Ps. 25 : 9. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." ver. 14. Hence the inspired apostle exhorts us "to receive the ingrafted word with meekness." James, 1 : 21. When men come to the reading or studying of the Holy Scriptures in the confidence of their own skill, wisdom, parts, learning, or understanding, God beholdeth them afar off, and scorneth to teach them. Oh, beloved brother, let us approach the word of God with a heart sensible of our own unworthiness to be taught, and our own inability to learn—ready to receive, embrace, and submit unto what shall be made known to us.

§ 8. It is scarcely necessary to remark that the Bible ought to be read with great seriousness and holy reverence. When God speaks, it becomes us to be serious and attentive. In prayer we speak *to God*; in the sacred Scriptures God speaks *to us*. If the ark was not to be touched because

it contained the law, with what reverence ought we to approach the Bible, which contains both the law and Gospel ! The Scriptures are the oracles of God, and not of men. Hence the apostle commended the Thessalonians, "that they received the Word, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." 1 Thess. 2 : 13. Besides, God hath promised his blessing "to them that *tremble* at his word." Isa. 66 : 2.

§ 9. To pray for the illumination of the Spirit is peculiarly necessary whenever we read the sacred Scriptures. The things of God knoweth no man but by the Spirit of God, by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. The wisdom that cometh from above is the most valuable acquisition we can possess. But to read and not to understand will be of no advantage. The *internal illumination* is as much necessary as the *external revelation*. Thus Jesus Christ not only repeated the words of Scripture to his disciples in the way to Emmaus, but he also *opened* their *understandings*, that they might understand them. Luke, 24 : 45. Without this, a person may have the brightest parts, and the most penetrating judgment, in other respects, and yet be unacquainted with the mind of God in his word. A treasury deep and immured in darkness may be filled with gold and costly pearls ; yet if a man goes into it without a light, instead of seeing what is desirable, he may be filled with fear and terror. Nor is it possible for a man, without the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit, to discover the riches and treasures of the Bible. There is "a veil over the heart" of every man, whether a Jew or gentile. Earnest prayer, therefore, for the guidance, direction, assistance, and illumination of the Spirit, to enable us to discern and understand the deep things of God, is most necessary. Where this is neglected, whatever we know, we know not as we ought. This illumination is the peculiar work of the Spirit. 2 Cor. 3 : 18. 4 : 6. It is promised by Christ, John, 14 : 26. 16 : 13. 1 John, 2 : 20, 27. Hence David prayed that the Lord would open his

eyes, or, according to the original, to remove the veil from his eyes; Ps. 118 : 18. and Paul prayed for this blessing for the Eph. 1 : 16–20. 3 : 16–19; for the Col. 2 : 2; and most earnestly do I pray, my dear Benjamin, that the Lord would take away every veil of darkness and prejudice, and give us more and more of the knowledge of himself, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, our blessed Immanuel.

§ 10. Besides a proper frame of mind, we ought likewise to read the Scriptures with proper *motives*. These ought to be no others but to know and to do the will of God revealed in the Bible. Would it not be absurd in a man to read a treatise on *husbandry* with a view to learn *navigation*, or to seek the principles of trade and commerce in an essay on music? No less absurd is it to read the sacred Scriptures with any other motive, or for any other design, than that for which God gave them. Now, the design of God was, *first*, to give us such a knowledge of himself and his mind and will, that we might so know him as to believe, fear, love, trust, and obey him in all things. Deut. 29 : 29. *Secondly*, as a rule of duty both toward God and man. 2 Tim. 3 : 15–17. Hence, saith David, “Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in and by thy truth.” Ps. 86 : 11. As a rule is of no benefit to the mechanic if he does not work by it, so the Bible is no benefit if it does not direct our conversation and conduct. The word must be “a light to our feet and a lamp to our path;” not merely to please the eye, but to direct our way, walk, and conduct. *Thirdly*, To administer counsel, consolation, and hope in all our distresses and tribulations. Ps. 119 : 24, 92. Rom. 15 : 4. God hath laid up a sovereign balm for every wound, and a cordial for our fears. Now, we ought to make ourselves acquainted with them, that we may know where to find them in case of need. *Lastly*, God’s design in giving us the Bible, is to give us infallible assurance of eternal life, with the prospect and some foretaste of its glories. This is a great means of supporting us under afflictions, and of weaning us from sin,

the world, and the flesh. Blessed Savior, deeply impress these thoughts upon my heart, and let them have their salutary influence upon my life.

§ 11. Allow me to mention but one direction more to be observed in reading the Bible; viz. *method*. God has set us an example in observing order and proper method in all his proceedings. Nothing can be expected to succeed without it. And it is of great importance in searching the Scriptures. Be wise in your choice, as it respects *time*, *matter*, and *quantity*. The morning is peculiarly favorable for reading, meditation, and prayer. The Bible should be read daily. Those that read but seldom are continually at a loss what they are about. Prov. 7 : 1-4. With respect to *matter*. The whole Bible should be read in order from Genesis to Revelation; six or eight chapters at a time, to become acquainted with the connection of the different parts. But one part of the Bible should be read oftener than another. The historical parts once, the Psalms twice, the Epistles three times in the course of a year. With respect to *quantity*, there should be a regular time fixed for reading the Bible, in order, as has already been observed, and a time for selecting a small portion for study, meditation, and prayer. A diligent comparison of the different parts of Scripture will remove many difficulties and doubts, and will make the most important doctrines clear, instructive, and edifying. We ought, also, thankfully and faithfully to make use of the commentators, and other useful books, explanatory of the sacred Scriptures. I now close this subject, my dear brother, with the exhortation of my blessed Savior, originally addressed to our Jewish brethren: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John, 5 : 39. And may you and I so read the sacred Scriptures, that, with our dying breath, we may be able to say with the prophet; "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jer. 15 : 16.

Letter VI.THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN
JEWS AND CHRISTIANS STATED.

The faith of a true Christian is the same as that of Moses
and the Prophets.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. I was duly favored with your letter. Its contents afforded me much pleasure, particularly your resolution to search the Scriptures. May you speedily find Him whom to know is life eternal. I will now proceed to show you that, in believing in Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, I have not departed from the religion of the Bible; nor does my creed differ from that of Moses and the prophets. The fundamental articles of my faith are as follows:

1. That there is but *one* God, but three distinct persons, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

2. That God is the creator of the universe, and the preserver and governor of every creature.

3. That God created Adam and Eve in his own image and likeness, perfectly holy and happy; that he allowed them to eat of every tree in Paradise, but prohibited them from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on penalty of death.

4. That our first parents broke this law or covenant, and thereby brought sin and misery upon themselves, and upon all their posterity.

5. That immediately after the fall or sin of our first parents, God promised the Redeemer of the world, and made from age to age, gradually, a clearer revelation of him, concerning the wonderful constitution of his person, the man-

ner of his life, the design of his mission, the union of his offices, the nature and design of his sufferings and death, his victory over death and the grave, &c.

6. That it is the work of the Holy Spirit to regenerate the sinner; to unite him to Christ by faith, and make him meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

7. That as soon as the sinner is thus united to Christ, he is justified, adopted into God's family, and will be kept, by the power of God, through faith, unto the enjoyment of eternal glory.

8. That it is our duty to make the moral law, or ten commandments, the rule of our life.

9. That Jesus Christ will come again, first to reign a thousand years upon the earth, and then to raise the dead; to judge the world, to banish the wicked to endless misery, and to receive the righteous to endless felicity.

Each of these articles will be more fully stated and scripturally proved in our future correspondence.

No doubt, my brother, you are surprised at my statement, for you, as well as our beloved brethren in general, suppose that the difference between the Christian and the Jewish religion is very great. So did I once, and therefore stumbled and almost perished. The doctrine of the Trinity, the change of the Sabbath, the omission of festivals and other ceremonies, besides a variety of objections, had greatly prejudiced my mind against Christianity, until I searched the Scriptures, and the happy result I shall give you in successive letters; trusting to remove thereby every difficulty, and answer every objection that at present prevents you from acknowledging Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, over all, God blessed for ever.

§ 2. The first, and indeed the *only* point to be established is, whether the Messiah hath come or not; and if he has come, whether Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah or an impostor.

Our nation assert that the Messiah has not yet come, and

that Jesus Christ was an impostor. Christians say, and I do believe, that the Messiah hath come at the time and manner promised, and that Jesus Christ is that Messiah. This is the only hinge on which the whole controversy between Jews and Christians turns.

§ 3. To settle this all-important subject, (to convince the judgment, although the heart may still remain unchanged,) is, however, as easy as it is important. There is but one way to lead to a true decision, but that is a sure and infallible way. We must find out the characteristics by which the true Messiah was to be distinguished, and examine whether they all meet in Jesus Christ. If they do, it is our duty to receive him; if not, we are equally bound to reject him as an impostor and deceiver. Thus, suppose a person had left, in his will, a large and valuable estate to a certain individual; the testator died. A number of individuals present themselves, each asserting himself to be the rightful heir, and claiming the estate. We are sure that one only can be the proper heir, and that all others must be mistaken; nay, it may be that neither is the heir, and we must wait for another. In such a case what *method* is to be adopted to find out the truth, and *who* is to be the judge? The thing is plain. Not the wise, the rich, the noble, &c. but those, and those only, who are appointed by, and possess the will of the testator, called the executors. If an individual be found who answers the whole description given in the will, he is to be declared the rightful heir, and all others are to be rejected as mistaken. If none answers the description, all are to be rejected, and the executors are to declare that the rightful heir is not yet come, and that they must wait for another. Thus we are to act with respect to the subject in hand. "God, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake, in time past, unto the fathers by the prophets," concerning the Messiah, who is the sum and substance of the Old Testament. Of this Testament or will, our nation was appointed the executors; "for to them were committed the oracles of God." They, therefore,

and not the Gentiles, were the only persons authorized and qualified to judge whether Jesus of Nazareth, of blessed memory, was the true Messiah or not, by comparing his pedigree, character, &c. &c. with the Old Testament, the will of the testator. This, I conceive, is the most probable reason why Jesus said "that he was not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel;" and why he commanded his apostles "not to go into the way of the Gentiles, nor into any of the cities of the Samaritans, but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and why, after his resurrection, they were to commence preaching at Jerusalem; and hence the apostle assigns this among the reasons why he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it was preached and made effectual to the Jews *first*. See Matt. 10 : 6, 15, 27. Luke, 24 : 47. Rom. 1 : 16. Hence, when John the Baptist sent to Jesus to inquire whether he was the Messiah, or whether they should wait for another, Jesus neither answered in the negative nor in the affirmative; he could not say *no*, for he knew that he was the Messiah; and he would not say *yes*; for he came not to bear witness of himself; but he directed them to some of the characteristics by which the Messiah was to be known; saying, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Matt. 11 : 2-5. And when the two disciples, in the way to Emmaus, were perplexed with doubts and fears, whether Jesus was the Messiah or not, Jesus expounded to them all that was written in the law, in the prophets, and in the book of Psalms, concerning the Messiah, and fulfilled in him. Luke, 24. In like manner the apostle Paul went into the synagogues every Sabbath day, reasoning with the Jews from the *Scriptures*, (the *Old Testament*, of course, for the *New* was not then written,) that Jesus was the Christ, or Messiah, the Son of God.

§ 4. Probably it may appear strange to you, my dear Benjamin, that our nation should have rejected Jesus of Nazareth as an impostor, if he was the true Messiah, answering the characteristics of the Old Testament. I might easily point out to you a variety of causes which led them to commit this fatal act, but for the present one must suffice. The art of printing not being known at that time, it must have been of immense expense to get the whole of the Old Testament written in Hebrew, on parchment, and therefore we may well suppose that few, very few only, could procure a copy. Hence, in the days of Josiah, one copy of the law only could be found in the whole Jewish nation. The scribes, lawyers, and other teachers, took the advantage of this circumstance, and taught the people more by the vain traditions received of the fathers than by the word of God. They led the people to expect a Messiah altogether different from the one promised to our fathers, characterized in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. All the blessings and benefits they expected from the Messiah were of a temporal nature only, and restricted wholly to our nation. They expected that he would overturn the Roman empire, set up the throne of David, his father, and raise his people above all other nations. Hence, when our blessed Lord and Savior came and professed to be the Messiah, multitudes followed him; and when they saw that he possessed almighty power; speaking to the raging waves of the sea, and causing a great calm; commanding legions of devils, and they instantly obeying; feeding thousands with a few loaves, and healing all manner of diseases; they greatly rejoiced, and desired to make him a king; but when Jesus plainly told them that his kingdom was not of this world, that he came to seek and save those that are lost, and that he must be crucified and slain, then their hopes and expectations being turned to disappointments, they cried, "Away with him; crucify him! crucify him! We will not have this man to reign over us." Thus, not knowing the

Scriptures, they rejected the true Messiah, and for the same reason our dear people follow their example to the present day. You perceive then, my dear Benjamin, the importance of making ourselves first well acquainted with the characteristics of the Messiah, delivered in the Old Testament, and then examining the history of the Lord Jesus Christ, contained in the New Testament, before we can decide the question, whether Jesus is the Messiah or not. I purpose therefore to follow this plan in my future letters.

§ 5. But before I commence these interesting subjects, it may not be improper to show, first, the *necessity* of a *Messiah*, or *Mediator*. For it will ever be true, that "the whole need not a physician, but those that are sick." The knowledge of our lost and ruined condition is absolutely necessary, before we can justly prize and value the remedy. Till men are really apprized of their danger and wants, it is impossible for them properly to estimate the Gospel grace, or to embrace the scheme of it with that full assent and warmth of affection which so inestimable a benefit deserves. I propose, therefore, to give you, in some future letters, a statement of the creation and fall of our first parents; their ruined and helpless condition, and the promise of a Messiah. The angel of the covenant be with you. Amen.

Letter VII.

THE CREATION OF MAN.

Dear Brother,

When I closed my last letter I had no idea that so much time would intervene before you would receive the present. I regret the delay, which could not easily be pre-

vented. Besides some unforeseen circumstances which occupied much of my time, the importance of the subject required more than usual deliberation. As much of the security and stability of a building depends on the foundation, so do the future letters depend on the subjects proposed in my last.

§ 1. The first of these subjects is the creation of man, or our first parents. From the sacred Scriptures we learn, and by faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, Heb. 11 : 3. Moses, our inspired historian, gives us, in a few verses, a most sublime description of the creation of the heavens and the earth, with all their hosts, by the *Word* and *Spirit* of Jehovah. The Psalmist, also, expresses it as elegantly, in a few words: "He spake, and it was; he commanded, and it stood fast, or they were created." Ps. 33 : 9. 148 : 5. God having thus made the world, and richly furnished it with every creature, wherein the glory of his wisdom, goodness and power might be seen, he finished the great design by creating man in his own image, and in his own likeness. "The house being built, its inhabitant appeared; the feast being set forth, the guest was introduced; the theatre being decorated and illuminated, the spectator was admitted, to behold the splendid and magnificent scenery in the heavens above, and the earth beneath; to view the bodies around him moving in perfect order and harmony, and every creature performing the part allotted in the universal drama; that seeing, he might understand, and understanding, adore its supreme Author and Director."—*Bp. Horne*.

§ 2. But though man be the last in creation, yet he is the noblest in our world. When Jehovah gave being to the universe, he formed three distinct orders of nature; the one purely *spiritual*, the other purely *material*, and between both, one *mixed*, which unites the extremes in itself. This is *man*, the abridgment of the universe, allied to the angels in his soul, and to *material* things in his body, and

capable of the happiness of both; by his *internal* faculties enjoying the *felicity* of the intellectual, and by his *external* tasting the *pleasures* of the sensitive world. But his greatest excellency was a perfect conformity to the Divine pattern. The account of man's creation is introduced with special solemnity, as the joint work of the co-eternal three. "And God said, let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness; and let them have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image,—in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Gen. 1 : 26, 27.

§ 3. The surest way of ascertaining the nature of the image of God, in which Adam was made, is by referring to the image of God, in which the soul is renewed by the grace of God. The image restored, was the image lost; and the image lost, was that in which Adam was created. The renewed image the apostle describes as consisting in *knowledge*, *righteousness*, and *holiness*. His words are, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in *knowledge*, after the image of him that created him." Col. 3 : 10. "And that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in *righteousness* and true holiness." Eph. 4 : 24.

§ 4. 1. With respect to knowledge, although we cannot ascertain the *extent* of the knowledge which Adam had in his first state, yet it certainly was very great. He knew himself, and he knew God, in a manner and to a degree adapted to the state and circumstances in which he was placed. He must have been conscious of the duty incumbent upon him, and of the felicity inseparably connected with it. His giving names to the various species of creatures, corresponding to their respective natures, has often been mentioned as a striking proof of the knowledge which he then had. Gen. 2 : 19, 20.

§ 5. 2. A second part of the image of God was righteousness. Righteousness sometimes includes knowledge and holiness, but here it is distinguished from both. As knowledge is seated in the *understanding*, righteousness may denote the *conformity* of the *will* to God. Thus innocent Adam not only knew his duty, but was inclined to it; had a will as well as a power to do it. He was naturally and habitually righteous. His heart was properly disposed towards God; with a love of good and a hatred of evil. The law was not written for him in tables of stone, but it was written upon his heart. Happy! thrice happy indeed, was innocent Adam! Whatever was the will of God was his will. Every duty incumbent upon him he was ever ready to perform. The reverse, alas! is the case with us in our fallen state. Only that person is happy, who is the subject of that renewing work of the Holy Ghost, by which the image of God is restored to the human soul.

§ 6. 3. Holiness is another part of the image of God. As innocent Adam had knowledge in his understanding, and righteousness in his will, so likewise he had holiness in his *affections*. They were placed upon proper objects and exercised in a regular manner. He loved God above all. He considered him as the supreme good, and the grand source of his happiness. He loved the creatures for God's sake; and all the beauty or sweetness he found in them, led him to adore and love his God the more.

In this state was man truly blessed and honorable. His mind was calm. His conscience easy. He knew no guilt. He felt no shame. He was a stranger to fear. No angry passions disturbed his soul. His body was free from disease and pain. He conversed with God, and was as happy as paradise could make him.

§ 7. 4. The *dominion* which God granted to Adam over the creatures, is by many divines considered as a part of the image of God in which he was created. In this he resembled that great Being who is Governor of all worlds.

That Adam was created perfectly free from sin, and in the full enjoyment of the favor of God, is evident from the testimony of Jehovah, who, when surveying the works of his hands, pronounced them "very good;" Gen. 1 : 31; and the wise and inspired King Solomon tells us that "God made man upright." Eccl. 7 : 29.

Reason also assures us that it was impossible for an infinitely wise, righteous, and powerful God, who made man to know, love, honor, and enjoy him, either not to delight in the work of his own hands, the effect of his own wisdom and power, or not to furnish him with those faculties and abilities by which he might answer the end of his creation.

This brief account may suffice, my dear Benjamin, to show the innocent and happy state in which Adam was created.

Letter VIII.

THE COVENANT, OR LAW OF WORKS.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. Having in my last given you a brief statement of the creation of man, I will now endeavor to give an account of the divine dispensation with him, generally called the Covenant of Works; and whilst attempting to do this, I feel the solemnity and importance of the remark of Dr. Witsius, that eminently pious and learned divine: "Whoever attempts," saith he, "to discourse on the subject and design of the divine covenants, by which eternal salvation is adjudged to man, on certain conditions equally worthy of God and the rational creature, ought, above all things, to have a

sacred and inviolable regard to the heavenly oracles, and neither, through prejudice nor passion, intermix any thing which he is not firmly persuaded is contained in the records which hold forth these covenants to the world. For, if *Zalenous* made it a condition to be observed by the contentious interpreters of his laws: *That each party should explain the meaning of the lawgiver, in the assembly of the thousand, with halters about their necks: and that what party soever should appear to wrest the sense of the law, should, in the presence of the thousand, end their lives by the halter they wore*; as *Polybius*, a very grave author, relates in his history, book 12, chap. 7. And if the *Jews* and *Samaritans* in *Egypt*, each disputing about their temple, were admitted to plead before the king and his courtiers on this condition only: *that the advocates of either party foiled in the dispute, should be punished with death*; according to *Josephus*, in his *Antiquities*, book 13. ch. 6. Certainly he must be in greater peril, and liable to sorer destruction, who shall dare to pervert, by rashly wresting the sacred mysteries of the divine covenants; our Lord himself openly declaring, that *whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 5 : 19.*—*Æconomy*, page 39.

§ 2. Both from sacred and profane history, it appears that the most ancient and common mode of making covenants, was by devoting an animal as a sacrifice; cutting it into pieces, and the covenanters passing through the midst of them, and afterward feasting together. The following passages are particularly worthy attention. And *Jehovah* said to *Abram*, “Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds he divided not.” *Gen. 15 ; 9, 10.* “Gather my saints together unto me;

those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Ps. 50 : 5. " I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when *they cut the calf in twain*, and *passed between the parts thereof*, the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, *which passed between the parts of the calf*; I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life; and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth." Jer. 34 : 18-20.

The covenant between Abimelech and Isaac was accompanied by a feast : " And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee : and we said, let there be now an *oath* betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us *make a covenant* with thee ; that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace : thou art now the blessed of the Lord. And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another : and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace." Gen. 26 : 28-31. The making of covenants, with such rites and ceremonies, was not without its signification. The *cutting* the animals *asunder*, denoted that, in the same manner, the perjured and covenant-breakers should be cut asunder by the vengeance of God. This is evident from the above passage of Jer. 34 : 18. and from the ancient form of these execrations recorded in *Livy*, book 1. " The Roman people do not among the first break these conditions ; but if they should, avowedly, and through treachery, break them ; do thou, O Jupiter ! on that day, thus strike the Roman people, as I do now this hog ; and be the stroke the heavier, as thy power is the greater." Hence the Hebrew expression to make a covenant, as you well know, is very expressive.

Coreth Berith, literally signifies, to cut the purifier, or purifying sacrifice. That the origin of this ceremony is of divine institution, there can be no doubt. And like all other sacrifices, it had for its object, or antitype, the sacrifice of the Messiah, whose soul and body were one day to be violently separated, to confirm the covenant of grace. But more of this hereafter. Having made these preliminary remarks on covenants in general, I will now give you a brief statement of the covenant of works.

§ 3. God having made Adam holy and happy, accommodated and furnished with every thing necessary and conducive to his felicity and comfort, both in soul and body, and having placed him in that delightful garden, distinguished by the name of Paradise, where he had in variety and plenty all the necessaries and comforts of life. He entered into a compact with him, which divines have called by different names. Some have styled it a dispensation, or constitution; others call it a law; and others a covenant, with different epithets, such as the covenant of innocence; the covenant of nature; the covenant of life: and the covenant of works.

§ 4. "A covenant," says Charnock, "is an agreement of two or more persons, in some common end pleasing to them both, upon certain articles and conditions voluntarily consented to by both, and to be performed by each, partly, with solemn obligations. So that in it there are two persons, mutual proposals and conditions, mutual consent, terminating in one and the same end." Hence it appears that although the covenant of works agrees with human covenants in the essential parts, yet it differs in several particulars. The parties are not equal; the plan is entirely of God, and man is bound to receive it without alteration or exception. But we are compelled to use names and modes of dealing among men, to express Divine dispensations. We shall therefore, with most divines, use the expression, "covenant of works," as the most suitable.

§ 5. That there is a law requiring duty, and forbidding sin; that men of all ages and descriptions are bound to do the former, and forbear the latter, is a necessary dictate of reason. But that there was a proper covenant made with the first man, promising life as the reward of his obedience, and threatening death as the punishment of his disobedience; the promise on the one hand, and the threatening on the other, extending to his posterity, as well as to himself, reason cannot possibly discover. To revelation, therefore, are we indebted for the discovery and knowledge of the covenant of works, as well as the covenant of grace. To the law and to the testimony, therefore, we must apply for information on this all-important subject.

§ 6. Besides the *moral* or *natural* law, engraven upon the heart of Adam, at his creation, as the rule of life, God was pleased to give him also a positive law, as a test of his obedience. The former God implanted, because it was just; the latter is just, because God commanded it.* Moses, in his short history of the origin of mankind, gives the following description of this transaction: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2 : 16, 17. In these words we have the *parties* transacting, Jehovah on the one hand, and man on the other; the *condition* specified, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; a double sanction annexed, first a threatening expressed: "thou shalt surely die;" and secondly, a promise understood—if he obeyed he should live.

§ 7. The contracting parties in this covenant are two. 1. God. He may be considered as the framer of it, and principal party. He is to be viewed as Creator, Ruler,

* On the nature, properties, &c. of the positive law, see my *Essays on Baptism*, Essay 1.

and Benefactor. On the part of God it was a display of goodness; for as man was the work of his hands, he must have regard to him, as every artificer has for his work, and would not despise him, but be concerned for his good; and therefore, in covenant, promised good things to him. It also flowed from his sovereignty; since all his good things are his own, and he can do with them as he pleases; and he disposed of them to Adam, by promises, in a covenant way.

2. The second party in the covenant was Adam. He is to be considered perfectly holy, and able to keep the covenant. "There was light in his understanding, sanctity in his will, and rectitude in his affections: there was such a harmony among all his faculties, that his members yielded to his affections, his affections to his will, his will obeyed his reason, and his reason was subject to the law of God."—*Boston*.

§ 8. 2. Man, as the federal head of the human race. That Adam was the federal head of his posterity, is evident from the comparison which the apostle made between Adam and Christ, in Rom. 5 : 12–18, and 1 Cor. 15 : 45, where Adam is called the *first man* and the first *Adam*, and described as natural and earthly, and Christ is called the *last Adam*, and described as spiritual and the Lord from Heaven.

These were the *only* two individuals made *public* persons and *federal* heads, under whom all mankind are comprehended. No other such person, or federal head, has appeared, or ever is to appear in our world.

God's dealings with mankind ever since the fall, show that there was a federal agreement. For if no covenant was made with Adam, as our representative, we can have no concern in what he did when he violated it; what he did can be placed to his account only, not to ours; there can be no transmission of guilt and punishment from him to us; in short, there can be no original sin in the world; and if there is no original sin, how can there be any actual? Is not the former the root, the latter the branches? Is not

the one the fountain, the other the streams? Can there be branches without a root, or streams without a fountain? According to this hypothesis, infants at least could have no sin. Is not sin the cause, and death the effect? But that infants as well as adults die, we all know. Infants, therefore, must have sinned. In their own persons they cannot have sinned; there must, therefore, be a federal head, in whom they federally subsisted, and in whom they have sinned. It was no unusual thing with God to make covenants with men and their posterity unborn. Witness God's covenant with *Noah*, Gen. 9 : 9; with *Abraham*, Gen. 17 : 4; and with the *children of Israel*, Deut. 29 : 14, 15. Nor have any of Adam's posterity reason to complain of such a procedure; since, if Adam had stood in his integrity, they would have partaken of all the blessed consequences of his standing, and enjoyed all the happiness that he did; and therefore should not murmur, nor esteem it injustice in God, in putting their affairs in his hand, that they share in the miseries of his fall; for if they would have received good through him had he stood, why should they complain of receiving evil things through his fall? But this part of the subject will be considered more fully hereafter.

§ 9. The condition of this covenant is the next thing which claims our attention. This was obedience, *perfect*, *personal*, and *perpetual* conformity to the revealed will of God. The *general standard* of this obedience was the *moral law*; the *special test* of it was the *positive prohibition* relating to the fruit of a particular tree in the garden, of which God said, "Thou shalt not eat of it."

§ 10. "This prohibition," saith the elegant Dr. *Bates*, "was upon most wise and just reasons. 1. To declare God's sovereign right in all things. In the quality of Creator he is *supreme Lord*. Man enjoyed nothing but by a derived title from his bounty and allowance, and with an obligation to render to him the *homage* of all. As princes, when they give estates to their *subjects*, still retain the royalty, and

receive a *small rent*, which, though inconsiderable in its value, is an acknowledgment of dependence upon them; so when God placed Adam in *Paradise*, he reserved this mark of his sovereignty, that in the free use of all other things, man should abstain *from the forbidden tree*. 2. To make trial of man's obedience in a matter very congruous to discover it. If the prohibition had been grounded on any *moral* internal evil in the nature of the thing itself, there had not been so clear a testimony of God's dominion, nor of Adam's subjection to it. But when that, which in itself was indifferent, became unlawful merely by the will of God, and when the command had no other excellency but to make his authority more sacred, this was a confining of man's liberty, and to abstain was pure obedience."

§ 11. It is here understood, as it has been hinted before, that Adam had both the knowledge of the will and law of God, and ability to fulfill it. The law was not yet written, either on tables of stone or on paper. He had it, however, imprinted on the fleshy table of his heart; and was in his whole man, soul and body, conformed to it. He was, and he did universally, what the holy law required him to be and to do. From his Creator, Adam had conformity of heart to the holy law, and *habitual* conformity of heart produces conformity of actions. A holy nature ever is accompanied with a holy life; as our Lord himself expresses it, *a good tree bringeth forth good fruit*.

§ 12. But to return to the properties of this obedience. It was to be *perfect*, without the least blemish. It must flow from the principle of love; without this, all is vain, 1 Cor. 13: it must extend to every part, for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Deut. 27: 26. And again. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty in all." James, 2: 10. It must be equally perfect in degree: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,

and with all thy mind." Matt. 22 : 37. Adam's obedience was also to be *personal*; not like the obedience of Christ for his people, or as the obedience of Adam would have been reckoned to his posterity, had he continued obedient. And it was required to be *perpetual*, not for a time only, but always.

§ 13. "Adam, indeed," saith a pious writer, "was now in a probationary state. That state was only to continue for a limited time. Had he continued obedient till the expiration of it, the condition of the covenant would then have been fulfilled, and his own everlasting felicity, and that of his numerous posterity, insured. But would he in that case have ceased to be conformed and obedient to the law? No. He would have been confirmed in a state of perfect and perpetual purity, as well as felicity and dignity. The law under which he was, is of universal and of endless obligation. Universal conformity to it is the felicity and the dignity of the rational creature. Such, my dear Benjamin, was the tenor, and such the demands of the *law*, or *covenant* of works. High, but just demands! Such demands, however, innocent Adam was able to answer. God required nothing of him but what he was able to do.

§ 14. We proceed now to consider the *sanctions* of this covenant, which are two; a threatening expressed, and a promise understood. The threatening is death, the promise is life. The threatening is best understood, or explained, by the event. It is not consistent with the justice of God to increase the penalty after the sin was committed. Whatever punishment, therefore, God inflicted, that must have been included in the original threatening. This punishment is mentioned in Gen. 3 : 16-19. It extends to the whole human race, and to the world to come, as will appear in a future letter. The death threatened is threefold.

§ 15. 1. Death, natural or corporeal, in opposition to life. This denotes not only actual dissolution of the union between soul and body, but the forerunners of it. Accord-

ingly, the moment man sinned, he began, agreeably to the *letter* of the threatening, to die. Not only did he fall under the power of spiritual death, as the precursor of eternal, but he began to die naturally; i. e. he was exposed to the miseries of this life, as the beginning of the actual dissolution of the mortal frame. No sooner did he sin, than he felt the consequences of it in both soul and body. He saw himself naked, and was filled with shame, remorse, and dread. If man had not sinned, he would have enjoyed natural life, i. e. soul and body would have continued united in perpetual enjoyment of felicity and comfort. This is necessarily implied in the threatening, and the apostle places this subject beyond all reasonable doubt or dispute. Rom. 5 : 12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Now, if death entered by sin, it is evident that if sin had not entered, death would not have entered.

§ 16. 2. Spiritual death was threatened in opposition to spiritual life. Spiritual life consists in union and communion with God. This is the highest felicity of the rational creature. So long as Adam obeyed the law he was approved and accepted of God. He was conformed and like to his Maker; he had both will and capacity to serve him. As he lived *by* God, so he lived *to* him. Such would have been his inexpressible joy and happiness had he not sinned. But alas, "how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" The very moment man sinned he fell into a state, in various respects, similar to that of the dead. He was totally deprived of a principle of spiritual motion and action. This is the unhappy situation to which he reduced his numerous posterity, and in which we all now descend from him. We come into the world spiritually blind, deaf, and dumb; insensible and unfeeling, incapable of spiritual motion or action; and in this unhappy condition we lie until he who *first* created man in his own image and in his own likeness, creates us anew in Christ Jesus. Such was

the description the apostle gave of the state of the Ephesians before and after their conversion, and includes himself amongst them. Eph. 2 : 1-6.

§ 17. 3. Lastly, death eternal is threatened in opposition to life everlasting. Man was made for eternity. He was placed into a state of probation, and at the end of it he would have been removed from the terrestrial to the celestial paradise, to enjoy eternal and inexpressible felicity. This earth certainly never was intended to be the perpetual dwelling of the countless millions of the human species. But man being in honor, continued not. He sinned, and became obnoxious to eternal death, i. e. an everlasting separation of the whole man from God, and the punishment of both soul and body in that separated state for ever. This punishment is indeed greater than we can bear, but not greater than we deserve. The inspired apostle describes it in the following awful and tremendous terms: "The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1 : 7-9. Fearing the length of this letter will exhaust your patience, passing over many things that might have been instructive, and omitting many curious questions which have been asked respecting man's state of innocence, I bid farewell to my beloved Benjamin.

Adam, our father and our head,
Transgress'd, and justice doomed us dead :
The fiery law speaks all despair,
There's no reprieve nor pardon there.

Letter IX.

THE FALL OF MAN.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. This letter invites your attention to a most mournful subject, the awful fall of our first parents from their state of holiness and happiness into a state of sin and misery.

Immutability is one of the incommunicable perfections by which the divine Being is distinguished from every created being. "I am Jehovah, I change not." Mal. 3: 6. Adam was made in the image of God, yet he was mutable. It was not the *essential* image of God, as Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, is of the Father; but only a created *moral* image in respect of some qualities answerable to the communicable attributes of God, such as have been stated in a former letter, viz. knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. These are infinite and unchangeable in the Creator, but finite and changeable in the creature. Adam, indeed, was created without sin, but not incapable of sinning, and consequently of losing his integrity, glory, and happiness.

§ 2. Many creatures, both angelic and human, are unalterably confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness; but the permanency of their state arises from divine purposes rather than from the immutability of their nature. God, no doubt, could immediately have confirmed our first parents in a state of purity and felicity, but it pleased him to place them, for a season, in a state of probation and trial. As he ever is sovereign in the distribution of all his favors to the creatures, he could either give to our original progenitors, or withhold from them, that superadded grace and strength by which they might have been for ever confirmed in their original state, and not so much as a possibility have been left of their falling from it. But this he was pleased

to withhold, leaving them to the *freedom* of their own will.

§ 3. Adam was under the most inviolable obligations to obey. He was allured to obedience by the encouraging prospect of the endless felicity which he was to obtain for himself and his posterity. He was deterred from disobedience by the most express and faithful warning of the fatal consequences of it to himself and his offspring.

§ 4. That the state of mankind is different from that in which our first parents were created; that there is a corrupt spring of sin and disorder in the nature of man; that the whole world lieth in ignorance, darkness, evil, and confusion; that there is an alienation and displeasure between God and mankind; God revealing his wrath and judgments from heaven, whence at first nothing might be expected but fruits of goodness and pledges of love; and man naturally dreading the presence of God and trembling at the effects of it, which at first was his life, joy, and refreshment; reason itself, with careful observation, will discover; it has done so unto many contemplative men of old, (Rom. 1: 18. 8: 20, 21;) but *what it* was that opened the *floodgates* unto all the evil and sin which they saw and observed, they *could not* tell.

§ 5. But that which they could not attain unto, we are clearly taught by divine revelation.

Our inspired historian, Moses, in a very few verses, gives us a faithful account of the circumstances which led to the fall of our first parents, and of the awful consequences which immediately followed. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, *Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, *Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* And the serpent said unto the woman, *Ye shall not surely die: for God*

doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Gen. 3: 1-6.

§ 6. Such is the account of the sin or fall of man. With the greatest propriety it is called a *fall*.

It supposes a former state of dignity, as well as of felicity. It bespeaks a present state of unhappiness and misery. *High* was man previous to this direful event. High was he in point of *relation*. He was the *Son of God*, Luke, 3: 38, high in character. High was he in point of *state*. He was in covenant with his Maker, and his vicegerent on earth. All the other creatures in our world were subject to him. High did he stand in his Maker's *estimation* and *favor*. High was he in point of *employment*. He glorified God in a manner of which all the other creatures in our lower world are incapable. He had high *attainments* and *enjoyments*. He enjoyed, as well as glorified, his Maker in a peculiar manner. Honorable, happy man!

But, alas! man being in honor, abode not! He fell, and O how low is the fall! Man has become an alien and outcast from God; unable to glorify him, and disqualified for the enjoyment of him, as well as without a title to it.

Let us consider the circumstances which led to this awful change.

§ 7. We notice first the *tempter*, called in the text *serpent*. On this subject there is a variety of opinions and curious conjectures. We name the two extremes, and choose the middle way. Some think that no real serpent was intended, but that the seduction of our first parents was effected *immediately* by Satan himself; others affirm that Satan had no concern in the temptation, but that it was effected solely by a natural serpent. The opinion which is most commonly

received, and which seems the most probable, is that Satan was the *agent* and a real serpent the *instrument*. Satan is a most malignant spirit; by creation an angel of light, but by sin he became an apostate from his first state, and a rebel against God's crown and dignity. Multitudes of them fell, but he that attacked our first parents was surely the *prince of the devils*, the ringleader in rebellion. No sooner was he a sinner but he was a Satan, no sooner a traitor but a tempter, a liar, and a murderer.

§ 8. It is generally supposed that the devil was urged to tempt our first parents by two strong and powerful passions, hatred and envy. His hatred to God is implacable; for being fallen under a final and irrevocable doom, he looked upon God as an irreconcilable enemy; and not being able to injure his essence, he struck at his image; he singled out Adam as the mark of his malice, that by seducing him from his duty he might defeat God's design, which was, to be honored by man's free and cheerful obedience, and so eclipse the lustre of his excellencies, as though he had made man in vain.

Envy, the first native of hell, is considered the second motive that urged Satan to tempt our first parents. Having lost the friendship and favor of God, and being cast out of heaven, the happy region of blessedness and joy, the sight of Adam's felicity highly exasperated him, and excited his grief, that man, who by the condition of his nature was inferior to him, should be prince of the world and the special friend and favorite of heaven, whilst he himself was a miserable prisoner under those fatal chains which restrained and tormented him, the power and the wrath of God. This made his state and condition more intolerable. His torment could only be allayed by rendering man as miserable as himself.

§ 9. It may not be unprofitable to notice the subtilty and art of Satan manifested in the management of the temptation. In the *matter* of the temptation, which had nothing in it-

self to deter, but much to allure and entice. Had he proposed the breach of a *moral* law, to love and worship *him* instead of God, or to kill her husband, &c. the woman, shocked at the thought, would have exclaimed, "Go behind me, Satan!" But he chose a *positive* precept, which had nothing in itself either good or evil, only as God had commanded it.

§ 10. Another part of his subtilty was in attacking the woman rather than the man. As an experienced general, in taking a castle, seeks for the weakest part of the walls, where it is easiest to enter, so did Satan; he assaulted the *weaker vessel*. "Though Eve was perfect in kind, yet," saith Mr. Henry, "we may suppose she was inferior to Adam in knowledge, and strength, and presence of mind." Some think Eve received the command not immediately from God, but at second-hand, by her husband, and therefore might the easier be persuaded to discredit it. It seems also most likely that he attacked Eve *when she was alone*, and had no time to consult with or take advice of her husband; for, as the wise man observed, "Wo unto him that is alone when he falleth: two are better than one, and a threefold cord is not easily broken." Had she kept close to the side out of which she was lately taken, she would not have been so much exposed.

§ 11. We may notice further, his skill in the *instrument* he chose. Many are the conjectures concerning the species, nature, properties, &c. &c. of this serpent, all of which I shall pass by, except the following: "It is supposed, and that not very improbably, that more discourse passed between the serpent and Eve than is recorded in Gen. 3, and it is thus represented: "The serpent catching the opportunity of the woman's being alone, makes his address to her with a short speech, saluting her as the empress of the world, and giving her a great many encomiums and dignifying titles. She wonders, and inquires what this meant? and whether he was not a brute creature? and how he came

to be endowed with understanding and speech? The serpent replies that he was nobler than a brute, and did indeed once want both these gifts; but by eating a certain fruit in this garden he had got both. She immediately asks what fruit and tree that was which had such a surprising influence and virtue; which when he had showed her, she replied, this, no doubt, is an excellent fruit, but God hath strictly forbidden us the use of it. To which the serpent presently replied, "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The way how these words are introduced plainly shows that something had passed previous thereto. And some suppose that the serpent, to confirm the truth of his assertion, pulled off some of the fruits of the tree, ate one in her presence, and presented another to Eve, who, before eating it, had the discourse with the serpent which is recorded in the subsequent verses."—*Boston.*

§ 12. The subtilty, as well as the wickedness of Satan, is further manifested in the gradation of his temptation. He does not adventure all at once to contradict the divine word; but only, with an air of modesty, insinuates a suspicion concerning it, and speaks as if he wished to receive information; for thus he addresses the woman: "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" Next he grows bolder, and assures her, in direct opposition to God's threatening, that though she did eat, yet she should not die. "God indeed did say so, to keep you in awe. But do not entertain such hard and unworthy thoughts of that God who is infinitely good and gracious. Do not think, that, for such a trifle as the eating of a little fruit, he will undo you, and all your posterity for ever, and so suddenly destroy the most excellent piece of his own workmanship, wherein his image shines in a most resplendent manner." Further, he represents God as their enemy, who is desirous to prevent their happiness. "For God does know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." As if he had

said, "God's design in that prohibition is only this: he knows that you shall be so far from dying, that thereby you shall certainly enter into a new and more noble and excellent kind of life. The eyes of your understandings, which are now shut in a great measure, as to the knowledge of many things, shall then be wide opened, and ye shall see more clearly and distinctly than you now do. You shall be as God, and shall attain to a kind of omniscience." Here is the Devil's true character; first "an angel of light," then "a liar," and last of all, "a murderer." It was Satan's master-piece, first to weaken her faith, and when he had shaken that, and brought her once to distrust God, then she was easily overcome, and presently put forth her hand to pluck the forbidden fruit. By these pretences he ruined Innocence itself; for the woman being deceived by these insinuations, swallowed down the poison of the serpent; and having tasted death herself, she became a tempter to Adam; for "she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Thus by *one* sin, the covenant of works was broken, its precepts violated, and its penalty incurred.

§ 13. The sentence pronounced on the tempter will be considered hereafter; we proceed to take a more particular view of the immediate consequences of the fall on our first parents themselves. See Gen. 3, 7-24. 1. As soon as they sinned, they fell under the curse of the law which the covenant denounced, viz. death. I have shown already, in a former letter, that the death threatened was temporal, or corporal; spiritual and eternal. Man became mortal, and subject to diseases, and pain of body, and to numberless griefs and distresses of soul. "Who can make a list," saith Dr. Bates, "of the evils to which the body is liable, by the disagreeing elements that compose it? The fatal seeds of corruption are bred in itself. It is a prey to all diseases, from the torturing stone to the dying consumption. It feels the stroke of death a thousand times before it can die once. At last life is swallowed up of death; and if death were a de-

liverance from miseries, it would lessen its terror ; but alas ! it is the consummation of all. The first death transmits to the second." Spiritual, or moral death, seized on all the powers and faculties of the soul. His understanding became darkened, his mind and conscience defiled, his affections inordinate, his will biased to that which is evil, and lifeless to every good work. Adam became also subject to eternal death, the just wages of sin, which consists in the wrath and displeasure of God revealed against all unrighteousness, and which comes upon the children of disobedience. As the body dies by the soul forsaking it, so the soul, by separation from God, its true life, dies to its well being and happiness for ever.

§ 14. 2. They lost the Divine image in which they were created. The image of God consisted, as has been shown above, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Instead of gaining the knowledge unlawfully sought after, Adam lost much of what he had. In the place of divine knowledge, darkness filled his mind. What ignorance and folly did he manifest by attempting to flee from the presence of the Omnipresent Jehovah, and by hiding himself from his all-seeing eye. They lost their original righteousness and holiness, and became altogether unrighteous and unholy. The nakedness of their bodies was a true emblem of the nakedness of their souls.

§ 15. 3. Their minds were filled with guilt, shame, and fear. Adam, whilst obedient, enjoyed peace with God, a sweet serenity of mind, a divine calm upon the conscience, and full satisfaction in himself. But after his sin he trembled at God's voice, and was tormented at his presence. "I heard thy voice, and was afraid," saith guilty Adam. He looked on God as angry, and armed against him, ready to execute the severe sentence. Conscience began an early hell within. Paradise, with all its pleasures, could not rescue him from that sting in his breast, and that sharpened by the hand of God. What confusion of thought,

what a combat of passions was he in ! When the temptation which deceived him vanished, and his spirit recovered out of its surprise, and took a clear view of his guilt in its true horror, what indignation was kindled in his breast ! How did shame, sorrow, revenge, despair—those secret executioners—torment his spirit ! Guilt is the consequence of sin, and a real sense of it will make it intolerable ; and nothing can remove it, and give peace to the conscience, but the precious blood of the Messiah. In vain do men try to commit sin in the dark, or to flee from the presence of God, to whom “the darkness and the light are both alike.” Nor will their endeavor to work out a righteousness avail more than a garment of fig-leaves, for “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isa. 64 : 6.

§ 16. 4. They were driven out of paradise, an emblem of their alienation from God, the only source of true happiness. For “in his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.” Ps. 16 : 11. And there is no other way of drawing nigh unto God but by the blood of the Cross. Universal nature was armed against rebellious man, and would have destroyed him, without the merciful interposition of God. The angels, with flaming swords, expelled him from paradise ; the beasts, which were all innocent whilst man remained innocent, espoused God’s interest, and are ready to revenge the wrong done to the Creator. The insensible creation, which at first was altogether beneficial to man, is become hurtful. The heavens sometimes are hardened as brass, in a long and obstinate serenity, and sometimes are dissolved in a deluge of rain. The earth became barren and unfruitful to the sower : it brings forth “thorns and thistles instead of bread.”

5. Lastly, they were forced to earn their subsistence by the sweat of their brow ; and to Eve, especially, peculiar calamities were threatened.

§ 17. Before I close this letter, my dear Benjamin, I must beg of you seriously to consider the awfully aggra-

vating circumstances which attended the conduct of our first parents. He that committed it was under special obligations to God. It was committed in paradise. Almost as soon as man was created did he grievously offend his Creator. Almost as soon as he had the honor of covenanting with his Maker, notwithstanding the flattering prospects which he had, he violated the covenant. Was he not now guilty of the basest ingratitude to his most bountiful benefactor? Was not this sin the most criminal and shameful disobedience? The most abandoned and infamous of the creatures was obeyed, the great God disobeyed. Was it not the most unnatural and unprovoked rebellion? The rightful proprietor of all worlds was man's rightful sovereign. Had not man solemnly promised fidelity and allegiance to him? Let no man say that the punishment was greater than the sin.

§ 18. To a superficial reader it may appear, if not altogether innocent and harmless, at most but a frivolous offence. But upon proper examination it will be found to be a most aggravated crime, or rather a complication of crimes. For though the *matter* of the offence seems small, yet the disobedience was infinitely great, it being the transgression of that command which was given to be the instance and real proof of man's subjection to God. The honor and majesty of the whole law were violated in the breach of that *symbolical precept*. It was a direct and formal rebellion, a public renunciation of obedience, an universal apostacy from God, and change of the last end, that extinguished the habit of original righteousness. Several writers have shown that the breach of this positive law carried in it a virtual violation of all the commandments of the moral law. Others have made it appear in a striking manner, that the conduct of Adam was the greatest infidelity; prodigious pride; horrid ingratitude; visible contempt of God's majesty and justice; unaccountable folly, and a cruelty to himself and to all his posterity. There is, however, a sin which exceeds that of Adam. The *infidel* who tramples under foot the

blood of Christ, sins greater than he, and is worthy of sorer condemnation. Heb. 10 : 29. For the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. 1 John, 1 : 7.

In my next, God willing, I shall show more particularly the effects of Adam's fall upon the whole human race. Blessed be God for the second Adam, the Lord from heaven !
Farewell.

Letter X.

ORIGINAL SIN.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. Frequently enormous expenses have been incurred, great hardships endured, and many valuable lives lost in following up rivers to their spring or origin. My intention, in the present letter, is to trace the ocean of sin and misery to its original source, generally styled original sin.

I acknowledge that of all the articles of faith, none appears harder to reconcile with reason and common sense than the doctrines of imputed sin and imputed righteousness. How sin can justly be imputed to the personally innocent, or righteousness to those who are personally sinful; how one can deserve condemnation because another has sinned, or justification and a reward because another has been obedient—at *first view*, looks hard to conceive, if not utterly impossible ever to comprehend. Nevertheless, these doctrines are true, and worthy of our serious consideration. For the knowledge of our fall in Adam, and its dreadful consequences, and our recovery by Christ, are the two great things on which the whole structure of true religion moves, and which

go linked together, as it were, hand in hand. As the former cannot be thoroughly understood without taking a survey of the latter, so the latter cannot be comprehended without a sound knowledge of the former. It is therefore of very great importance both to be established in the belief of the doctrine, and to acquaint ourselves with the nature and consequences of Adam's sin.

§ 2. In my last letter I have stated the immediate consequences of the fall of our first parents with respect to themselves; I will now point out those which relate to their posterity. These effects are generally called original sin, and consist of two parts, that which is *imputed* to us, and that which is *inherent* in us; the former is called the guilt or punishment of Adam's sin, and the other is called depravity.

§ 3. The word *original sin*, indeed, is not found in the sacred Scriptures, yet that which is intended by it, being so clearly grounded on the word of God, the name cannot disgust any who have not a quarrel against the thing, no more than the name of trinity, sacraments, &c.

§ 4. It is called *original sin*, because it is in every one from his original; it may say to every one, "As soon as thou wast, I am;" or because it is derived from Adam, the original of all mankind, out of whose blood God has made us all; or because it is the original of all other sins.

§ 5. The two parts of original sin should never be considered *as separate* from each other, but as most closely united; but to view them fully, they must be considered as *distinct* in our *ideas*.

In the present letter I shall confine myself to that part called "the depravity of our nature." To present the subject in a clear light we shall consider its *nature, properties, reality*, and *consistency* with the character of God. First, depravity consists in a want of all that is good, an aversion to it, and a propensity to all evil.

§ 6. There is a privation of all that is good. By the first act of sin, as has been shown, there was a loss of ori-

ginal purity and righteousness; the image of God, wherein man was created, was defaced and blotted out, and it left our first parents destitute of all that is holy and good. Hence their posterity could not derive from them any dispositions or principles that are holy or good. For they could not communicate to their offspring what they themselves did not possess. The copy cannot be better than the original, nor the effect nobler than the cause. No stream can rise higher than the fountain: it is no wonder, therefore, if that which is poisonous brings forth a poisonous seed. The natural constitution of every thing is transmitted by natural generation. Hence it is said of Adam, that he "begat a son in *his own* likeness, after his image." What the apostle said of himself is true of all: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Rom. 7:18. No grace, no holiness, nothing that is truly and spiritually good. There is neither seed nor fruit, neither root nor branch, neither inclination nor motion, neither habit nor act that is good or acceptable in the sight of God. Hence the Holy Ghost has declared us to be "*without strength*, not sufficient of ourselves to do a good action, to speak a good word, or so much as to think a good thought."

§ 7. Nor are we allowed to understand it, that the mind of man, in its present state, is "like a fair sheet of paper, capable of any impress." Alas! it is far otherwise. There is in every man not only a *want* of original righteousness, but an *awful* propensity to all evil, and an astonishing aversion to all good. "The uprightness and integrity of man," saith Bishop Beveridge, "wherein he was first created, is now lost, the whole soul and body corrupted, the whole harmony of man dissolved; so that we are not only deprived of grace, but defiled with sin; the image of God is not only razed out, but the image of the devil is engraven upon our souls; all men, and all of men being now quite out of order." Sin is the natural man's element; and as the fish is averse to come out of the water, so is the sinner averse to emerge

from the mire of sin, in which he delights to lie. Hence said the Lord Jesus Christ to the Jews in his day, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." John, 5:40. They were not only naturally unable to come, but they had no inclination to the duty. But the awful nature of this depravity will appear more fully, if we consider its properties.

§ 8. 1. It is incorporated with our very nature; it has a real being in us before we have a visible being in the world. The old man is furnished with all its members before we are formed, quickened before we are alive, and born before we come into the world. What David confessed of himself is true of all mankind: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5. With the beginning of our existence we have the snares of sin in our bodies, the seeds of sin in our souls, and the stain of sin upon both. This is what the wise man called "foolishness bound up in the heart of a child," that proneness to evil and backwardness to good, which is the burden of the regenerate and the ruin of the unregenerate. By nature we bear the image of the *earthly* man in his fallen condition, which image is called the "*old man*," "the *body* of sin," "the *flesh*," "sin indwelling," "the desires of the flesh and of the mind," which plainly shows that our corrupt dispositions and propensity to evil is hereditary to us, and transmitted from parents to their children, and is therefore *entailed* upon all, and natural to all that partake of the human nature in its fallen state; so that it is impossible to be a man and not to have this universal fault and corruption of nature; and the reason why one man imitates another in actual transgressions is, because it is *natural* for him to do so. Evil examples only stir up, discover, and make known what was hid in the heart. Thus the viper of natural corruption, by the heat of temptation, revives, and makes its poisonous and malignant nature manifest; *it was there before*, else external example would not have produced it. Cain would never have murdered his brother Abel if he had sinned *only* by

example. It is certain that corrupt examples have a powerful influence on the human heart, because it is already corrupt and prone to evil; therefore the company of wicked men, the wanton and profane, should be most carefully shunned and avoided; for "evil communications corrupt good manners;" by these, indeed, an alteration is made in the *manners* or actions of men, but the *fountain* of all our thoughts, words, and works is poisoned already and made bitter by original sin. We observe,

§ 9. 2. This corruption is universal. It extends to *every individual* of the human race, (the second Adam excepted,) and to *every part* of each individual. When the question is asked, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" i. e. how can a holy or righteous person be born of a sinner, the answer is peremptory—"Not one." Job, 14: 14. All of every nation, people, kindred and tongue, are sharers in this depravity. What difference soever there be in their *climates*, *colors*, and external *conditions* of life, yet the blood from whence they spring taints them all. Both Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, male and female, bond and free, equally derive their being and nature from Adam; therefore his depravity of nature is in them all; none is exempt, for we are all his offspring; herein the prince and the beggar, the philosopher and the fool, are upon a level; and in him that is least sensible of it, it is most manifest.

§ 10. That all men are not *equally* wicked, riotous, and immoral, is manifest, and we allow it; which is probably owing to the difference of their bodily constitutions, education, and temptations. Many also are withheld under various restraints, and so prevented from doing the evil and committing the sin which their natures incline them to: thus, for want of power or opportunity, they cannot do the evil which they otherwise would do. When *Hazael* was informed by the prophet that he would commit such evil as to set cities on fire, dash out children's brains, and rip up women with child, he was angry. But he did that afterward

when king, which he seemed to detest so much as to think he should never be guilty of them unless transformed into a dog. Poor Hazael! he was not acquainted with the desperate corruption of man's heart, which habitually inclines him to the most barbarous, and cruel, and bloody acts.

§ 11. And as the whole world lies in wickedness, so the whole man is full of it. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it." Isa. 1: 5, 6. "There is an ocean of corruption," saith Mr. Clarkson, "in every man. And as the sea receives several names from several shores and coasts, so does this from the several parts and faculties. In the mind it is enmity, in the thoughts vanity, in the apprehension blindness, in the judgment darkness and error, in the will rebellion, in the conscience searedness, in the heart hardness, in the affections carnality, in the memory unfaithfulness, in the fancy folly, in the appetite inordinancy, in the whole body vileness." Every part, every faculty, is naturally corrupted and wholly corrupted in all acts. The mind in its apprehensions blind, in its judgment erroneous, in its reasoning foolish, in its designs evil, in its thoughts vain. The will, as to its elections, perverse, choosing evil rather than good; in its consent servile, over-ruled by corrupt judgment, base appetite; in its commands most tyrannical; in its inclinations wicked; in its intentions obdurate; in its frictions furious. The memory apt to receive what is evil, and to exclude what is good; to retain that which should be excluded, to let slip that which should be retained; to suggest that which is wicked, to smother that which is good. The conscience corrupt in its rules and principles, in its injunctions and prescriptions, in its accusations, in its absolutions, &c. &c. Time would fail to speak of the imagination, the affections, the appetites, the senses, and the different organs and members of the body, which have all become the members of unrighteousness. Bishop Wilkins, whose fine sense, learning and philosophy were never disputed, speaking of

this subject, saith, "The heart is the root and fountain of all other sin, from whence every actual abomination doth proceed. Atheism, and pride, and baseness, and cruelty, and profaneness, and every other vice which the most wicked wretch in the world is guilty of, doth proceed from hence. Hell itself, which is the proper place of sin, is not more full of sin, for the kind of it, than our natures are." "This further appears," saith he in another place, "if we look upon *our own natures* in the rage, blasphemies, baseness, and madness of other men's lives; there being not any kind of evil which either man or devil hath committed, but there are in *our natures* the principles and inclinations to it; the best of us being, *by nature*, as bad as the worst of sinners."

§ 12. I know, my dear Benjamin, that this is an humbling and mortifying description of human nature, yet it is not the less true. The sacred Scriptures declare it, the miseries in the world confirm it, and the conduct of men establishes it beyond a reasonable dispute. Yea, the half has not been told. Let us first attend to the testimony of the sacred Scriptures. Our inspired historian, Moses, tells us that even before the flood it was declared by a voice from heaven, not only that "the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, but that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. 6:5. "How came it to pass, saith the pious Mr. Charnock, "that man's wickedness should swell so high? whence did it spring? from the *imagination*?—Though there might be sinful imaginations, might not the superior faculty preserve itself untainted? Alas! that was defiled; the *imagination of the thoughts* was evil. But though running thoughts might wheel about in his mind, yet they might leave no stamp or impression upon the will and affections. Yes, they did; the imagination of the thoughts of his *heart* was evil. Surely all could not be under such a blemish: were there not now and then some pure flashes of the mind? No, not one. *Every imagination*. But granting that they were evil, might there

not be some fleeting good mixed with them; as a poisonous toad hath something useful? No, *only evil*. Well, but there might be some intervals of thinking, and though there was no good thought, yet evil ones were not always rolling there. Yes, they were *continually*; not a moment of time that man was free from them. One would scarcely imagine such an inward nest of wickedness; but God has affirmed it; and if any man should deny it, his own heart would give him the lie. Again saith the Lord, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." In the days of Job human nature was no better. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job, 14: 4. Eliphaz was of the same sentiment. "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" Job, 15: 14. David saith, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Ps. 58: 3. Solomon testifieth that "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child." Prov. 22: 15; and that "there is not a just man upon earth that does good and sinneth not." Eccl. 7: 20. By the prophet Jeremiah, Jehovah declares that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 17: 9.

§ 13. Jesus Christ, in his conversation with Nicodemus, asserts that human nature is corrupt, and all that proceeds from it is corrupt; "that which is born of flesh is flesh." John, 3: 6; and hence proves the absolute necessity of regeneration; that old things may pass away, and *all* things be made *new*. 2 Cor. 5: 17. This change is set forth by such phrases as these: being born again, having a new heart given us, and a new spirit put within us; being quickened, or brought to life when dead; and being created after God, in allusion to the first creation of man in the likeness of his Maker. All which strong modes of expression evidently imply that man, by the fall, is become totally depraved.

§ 14. From scripture proofs we proceed to establish the

truth by facts. We notice first the conduct of children. Who has marked their conduct, and is not constrained to acknowledge that the most early acts of their reason and the first instances of their apprehension are sin? The vicious inclinations which appear in the *cradle*, the violent motions of anger which disturb *sucklings*, their endeavor to exercise a weak revenge on those that displease them, must convince us that the corruption is natural, and proceeds from an infected original. This corruption grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength. They can no sooner speak, but falsehood and lies drop from their tongues. They are stubborn and rebellious, prone to evil and averse to good; and if it be *manifestly* thus with *some*, it is the undoubted state of all, for their hearts and natures are fashioned alike; all men are of one blood and of one original; the fountain of their nature is one and the same: however, then, there appears to be a difference in the natural dispositions and propensities of children to evil, it cannot be that any of them can be naturally disposed to good; for "a bitter fountain cannot send forth *sweet waters*," although in some of its streams it may be less *perceptible* than in others. "How can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?"

§ 15. From the conduct of children, we proceed to notice the sin and misery in the world. An eminent writer saith, "*That man is a fallen creature* is evident, if we consider his misery as an inhabitant of the *natural* world; the disorders of the globe we inhabit, and the dreadful scourges with which it is visited; the deplorable and shocking circumstances of our birth; the painful and dangerous travails of women; our natural uncleanness, helplessness, ignorance, and nakedness; the gross darkness in which we naturally are, both with respect to God and a future state; the general rebellion of the brute creation against us; the various poisons that lurk in the animal, vegetable, and mineral world, ready to destroy us; the heavy curse of toil and sweat to which we are liable; the innumerable calami-

ties of life, and the pangs of death. Again, it is evident, if we consider him as a citizen of the *moral* world; his commission of sin; his omission of duty; the triumphs of sensual appetites over his intellectual faculties; the corruption of the powers that constitute a good *head*—the understanding, imagination, memory, and reason; the depravity of the powers which form a good *heart*—the will, conscience, and affections; his manifest alienation from God; his amazing disregard even of his nearest relatives; his unaccountable unconcern about himself; his detestable tempers; the general out-breaking of human corruption in all individuals; the universal overflowing of it in all nations. Some striking proof of this depravity may be seen in the general propensity of mankind to vain, irrational, or cruel diversions; in the universality of the most ridiculous, impious, inhuman, and diabolical sins; in the aggravating circumstances attending the display of this corruption; in the many ineffectual endeavors to stem its torrent; in the obstinate resistance it makes to divine grace in the unconverted; the amazing struggles of good men with it; the testimony of the heathens concerning it; and the preposterous conceit which the unconverted have of their own goodness.”

Now, my dear Benjamin, I have given you a plain, and, I trust, a true statement of the origin of all the sin and misery in our world.

§ 16. I shall now close this letter with the following observations, taken from one of the lectures of my dear tutor, the late Dr. Bogue.

“I. When God made Adam, there were in him two kinds of principles—*natural and supernatural*. The former includes all the powers of the mind, appetites, passions, which are essential to human nature; and principles too, reason, conscience, self-love, desire of approbation. The latter consisted of original righteousness, the moral image of God, and true holiness, which flowed immediately from the Holy Spirit. This bore sway over inferior natural

principles, and while things continued in this situation he was holy and happy.

II. By the fall, this beautiful order was destroyed. The natural principles remained; the supernatural principles were in God's righteous displeasure taken away; and from this constitution man became a creature of this present world, and seeks his happiness from it.

III. From this view of things we may account for the depravity of human nature.

1. There is no taint, nor stain, or positive malignity infused into the soul from above; nor is there any thing in the mere matter of the body that is vicious. God cannot, consistently with his nature and perfections, be active in infusing any bad quality, disposition, or inclination, into the human soul or body.

2. God creates the soul with its mere faculties and principles, but without original righteousness, and forms the body of mere matter, with the necessary organs.

3. From the want of supernatural principles and original rectitude, man has no relish for spiritual things, nor love to God, nor spiritual life.

4. The natural principles mentioned above, having the entire government of the human heart, lead men to consider the present world as the great and only sphere of their employment, and worldly objects as their chief good.

5. From the natural workings of these principles in the heart all our depravity flows, and may thus be accounted for:

1. The appetites, and passions, and external senses are excited early in life; reason grows more slowly.

2. Reason, conscience, self-love, sometimes allow the appetites and passions to bear boundless sway, without any regard to the commands and threatenings of God.

3. When reason, conscience, and self-love have influence, and restrain appetites and passions, outward wickedness is repressed, and the character is much fairer in the eyes of

the world; but no spiritual life, and still under the power of selfish and depraved principles.

4. When men see that God denounces his righteous indignation and wrath against those who go on in the way of iniquity, and love him not with their whole heart, they are displeased with his government and constitution, and resolve to go on in their wickedness. Hence arises an enmity against God in their hearts.

5. This depravity is always increased by actual transgression, and a course of sinning against God.

6. Perhaps this depravity is heightened or lessened by the passions of the soul, and humors of the body, of the immediate parents."

§ 17. To inquire how this corruption is propagated from Adam to his posterity, is a question more curious than profitable, and has been well taxed by the story of Augustine: A man having fallen into a pit, one spies him, and asks carelessly, "How came you there?" "Oh," cries the man from the miry pit to him, "hasten to get me out, rather than trouble yourself to inquire how I fell in."

This is the **gordian** knot in theology. We cannot account for it, but from the will of God. That the Almighty could have prevented this awful state of things, none will call in question. Why he hath permitted it, forms one of those deep things of God, of which we can know but little in the present state; only this we are assured of, that he is a God of truth, and that whatever he does, or permits, will ultimately tend to promote his glory. Now, my brother, farewell, and "may the God of Peace sanctify us wholly in body, soul, and spirit."

Great God! renew our ruined frame;
Our broken powers restore;
Inspire us with an heavenly flame,
And flesh shall reign no more.

Letter XI.

IMPUTATION OF ADAM'S SIN.

Dear Brother,

In my last I mentioned that original sin consists of two parts, i. e. inherent depravity, and the imputation of Adam's sin. The former has been considered, and I will now give you a statement of the latter.

§ 1. By *Adam's sin*, I mean his disobedience in eating of the forbidden fruit; and by the *imputation* of that sin to his posterity, I mean the putting to their account the guilt, i. e. the punishment due to that disobedience. Not the *act*, but the *consequences* of the act are imputed to them. This subject may be illustrated by similar daily transactions amongst men, and by an annual divine institution. With respect to the former, suppose A. borrows one hundred dollars of B. a banker; C. becomes security. A. fails, and is put in prison; C. is prosecuted and found guilty—not of having borrowed the money, but of being bound to pay it, because he voluntarily offered to be security. B. the banker, puts the amount to the account of C. as debtor, and to the credit account of A. accompanied by the following memorandum: C. owes these one hundred dollars, not that he borrowed them, but as security for A. A. is liberated from prison because his one hundred dollars are paid, not by himself, but by C. his security. With respect to the Divine institution, I allude to *Yom Kippur*, i. e. the day of atonement, when according to Leviticus, chap. 16, all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, are confessed over the head of the goat, while Aaron lays both his hands upon it, and he is said to put, or transfer them all upon the head of the goat,

and that the goat should bear upon him all their iniquities into the wilderness, or a land of separation. Now surely none who reads this account would consider the goat as having *actually* committed any sin, but only *made to suffer*, by the sovereign appointment of God, the punishment due to the sins of Israel; whilst the believing and penitent Israelite obtained reconciliation with God through the sufferings of the innocent victim.

§ 2. That Adam's sin is thus imputed to his posterity, is evident from the sacred Scriptures. However disagreeable this truth may appear to corrupt nature, and however mysterious to all, it is confirmed by that revelation which we are to make our guide in all affairs of a religious concern. Thus the apostle, when describing the wretched state of the Ephesians before their conversion, says: "*We all were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*" Eph. 2 : 3; i. e. as soon as we are born, we deserve, lie exposed unto, and are under a law-sentence of the wrath of God. This is the *natural* state of all mankind, not only of the children of disobedience, but also of those who through grace are made heirs of eternal life; not only of grown persons, but of infant babes. Again, the apostle, in writing to the Corinthian church, says that "Adam was the cause of death, and that in him all die." 1 Cor. 15 : 22. In him, as the common parent of the human race, and the federal head of all his natural posterity, they all sinned and died; the sentence of death passed upon them in him. They became subject to a corporal death, which has ever since reigned over mankind, even over infants, such who have not sinned after the similitude of his transgression. But let us more particularly attend to the statement of the apostle in Rom. 5, from the 12th to the 19th verse. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (For until the law, sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from

Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." From these words it evidently appears that the apostle took it for granted that it was a doctrine well known and believed, that Adam's sin was imputed to the whole human race.

§ 3. This will be still more clear, if we consider the scope and design of the apostle in this context, which is to illustrate the doctrine of justification, and to represent the way in which we are made partakers of the righteousness of Christ. This is the professed design of the comparison he here makes between Adam and Christ; it is as if he had said, As Adam transmits sin and death to all his natural posterity, so Christ conveys righteousness and justification of life to all his spiritual seed. The way of conveyance in both is the same. Now, how are we made righteous by the obedience of Christ, but by the imputation of that obedience to us? And if so, when we are said to be made sinners by the disobedience of the first man, the antithesis requires that it should be meant, of our being made sinners by the imputation of his disobedience to us.

§ 4. Again, we observe the apostle calls Adam a figure

of him that was to come, i. e. Christ. Now there are no other instances in which Adam can be said to be a *figure* more properly than in the following instances: the first Adam was the head of the covenant of works; the second Adam was the head of the covenant of grace. The first represented all mankind that should descend from him in the common way; the second represented all the chosen of the Father, all that were given to him. By the one, therefore, came death; by the other, eternal life.

§ 5. Further, it is observable that the apostle repeats the same idea in a variety of expressions: that death was introduced into the world by the sin of Adam; that death is become the lot of all men, for all have sinned; that by Adam's disobedience many were made sinners; that by his offence many die, yea, that through that offence condemnation has come upon all men.

§ 6. In the next place we appeal to facts. The sufferings and death of those who have never been guilty of actual sin, prove that they must suffer and die for the sin of another. Such are the sufferings and death of infants. What a train of evils do we witness in these little creatures! What cries and tears, what pains and agonies, enough to move the hardest heart! Some soon take their leave, disappoint the wishes and expectations of their fond indulgent parents, and enter eternity; whilst others stay some days or months to taste the bitter cup of sufferings, to linger under painful diseases, till their tender frame is entirely broken, and they yield to all-conquering death. And what can be the reason of all this, but sin? That sin is the cause of sufferings and death is evident from many parts of Scripture. "Wherefore," saith the prophet, "should a living man complain," or grieve, vex and murmur under his various afflictions, when it is "for the punishment of his sins?" Lam. 3 : 39. And the apostle, in the above-mentioned passage, Rom. 5 : 12, saith that death came into the world by sin; and that the reason why all die, is because all have

sinned ; and Rom. 6 : 23, he expressly declares that "the wages of sin is death." Whoever therefore dies, must be a sinner either by his own act or by imputation ; for to allow the effect without the cause is a glaring absurdity. Besides, where there is no sin there can be no just condemnation, and where there is no condemnation there can be no death. Now, if God condemn and execute judgment upon any man, he must needs be guilty and worthy of the punishment ; for He saith himself, "Thou shalt not justify the wicked nor condemn the innocent." But we see, as has already been observed, new born babes, who never personally acted, or were conscious of sin, condemned for sin, and suffering death as transgressors ; they must, therefore, be guilty before God, by whose authority and power this judgment is passed and executed upon them.

§ 7. Dr. Bates, in treating on this subject, has the following important observation : "The ignorance of this made the heathens accuse nature, and blaspheme God under that mask, as less kind and indulgent to man than to the creatures below him. They are not under as hard a law of coming into the world. They are presently instructed to swim, to fly, to run, for their preservation. They are clothed by nature, and their habits grow in proportion with their bodies ; some with feathers, some with wool, others with scales, which are both habit and armor ; but man, who is alone sensible of shame, is born naked, and though of a more delicate temper, is more exposed to injuries by distempered seasons, and utterly unable to repel or avoid the difficulties that encompass him. Now the account which Scripture gives of original sin silences all these complaints. Man is a transgressor from the womb ; and how can he expect a favorable reception into the empire of an offended God ?"—*Harmony.*

§ 8. I shall now close this part of our subject with some testimonies from some of our most ancient Jewish writers, and from some eminent Christian authors. We have al-

ready seen from the Scriptures, what was the sentiment of Moses, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David and Solomon. From the writings of our ancient Rabbins, it appears that they believed,

§ 9. 1. That Adam was the federal head of the whole human race. Menass. ben Israel saith, "Whereas Adam was to be the head and principal of the human nature, it was necessary that God should endow him with all perfection and knowledge." De Fragilitate, p. 34. Again in his discourse, De Termino Vitæ, he says, "Aben Ezra saith that the definite article *Hay* is not prefixed unto proper names in the Scriptures, only it is so unto the word Adam, Gen. 3 : 22 ; and the reason is, because in Adam all his posterity, the whole race of mankind is denoted and signified. Again, in Bemid. Rab. fol. 198, 3. descanting on those words, *as one that lieth upon the top of a mast*, it is said, "this is the first man, who was a head to all the children of men." In Caphtor fol. 102, 1, speaking of Adam, it is said "that he was the *root* of the creation, or of the men of the world." Again, in Alshech in Coheleth it is said, "Adam comprehends all ; for every man was in the first Adam."

§ 10. 2. They further say, that he sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit, and that the punishment of this sin was death of body and soul. On the doubling of the word in the threatening, *in dying thou shalt die*, it is remarked : "this double death, without doubt, is the punishment of the body by itself, and also of the soul by itself." Joseph Albo, Sepher Ikkarim, L. 4. c. 41. Another Rabbi is quoted by Fagius, on Gen. 2 : 17. "If the flesh sin without the spirit, why is the soul punished ? Is it one thing that sinneth and another that is punished ? or rather, is it not thus that both sin together." Again, speaking of the sense which Adam had of the greatness of his crime, it is said : "On the first day of the week (or on the first Sabbath) Adam entered into the water up to his neck ; and he afflicted himself se-

ven weeks, until his body became like a sieve; and Adam said before the holy blessed God, Lord of the whole world, let my sins, I pray thee, be done away from me, and accept of my repentance, that all ages may know that there is repentance, and that thou wilt receive them that repent and turn unto thee." Pirke Avoth, ch. 20.

§ 11. 3. They believe that "death is the wages of sin." For thus we read in Sepher Ikkarim, L. 4, ch. 13, and in Tal. Trac. Shab. fol. 55, 1. Wayik. Rab. parash 37. fol. 176. 3. Mid. Koheleth. fol. 70, 4. Zohar in Gen. fol. 44, 4. Zeror. Ham. fol. 115, 1. "That there is no death without sin, no punishment or correction without iniquity." And Maim. in More Nev. p. 3, denies that there are any corrections out of love.

§ 12. 4. They teach that the sin of Adam was imputed to all his natural posterity; both with regard to guilt and depravity. *With respect to the former*, they say, "It is not to be wondered why the sin of Adam and Eve was engraven and sealed with the signet of the King, (i. e. constitution or covenant) to be propagated unto all following generations; for in the day that Adam was created, all things were finished, so that he was the perfection and complement of the whole workmanship of this world. Therefore, when he sinned, the whole world sinned; whose sin we bear and suffer, which is not so in the sin of his posterity." R. Menach. Rakan. in Sec. Bereshith. Again, in the Targum on Ecl. 7, 29, it is said, "God made the first man upright and innocent before him, but the serpent and Eve seduced him, and gave cause why the day of death should come on him and all the inhabitants of the earth." R. Joseph Albo thus concludes, Lib. i. ch. 11. "All the punishments relating unto Adam and Eve for their first sin, belong unto all mankind." Hence the death of those whom they considered to be righteous, is ascribed to the death of Adam. Among these they reckon Benjamin, the son of Jacob; Amram, the father of Moses; Jesse, the father of David; Chileab, the

son of David, and some others. Shab. fol. 55, 2. Bava Bathra, f. 17, 1. The Targum, on the last chapter of Ruth, saith, "And Obed begat Jesse, who was called *Nachash*, and there was no iniquity or corruption in him for which he should be delivered into the hand of the angel of death to take his soul from him; and he lived many days, until the counsel that the serpent gave to Eve abode before the Lord; and upon that counsel were all the inhabitants made guilty of death; and upon the account of that sin died Jesse the righteous." Again, R. Yose, the Galilean, said, "Go forth and learn the merit of Messiah the King, and the reward of that righteous *one* above the first Adam, who had only negative precepts given unto him, which he transgressed; behold how many deaths befell him and his generations, and the generations of his generations, unto the end of all generations." Siphri. Once more, we read in Zohar. Lev. f. 46, 2, "When Adam sinned all the whole world sinned, and his sin we bear." And on Gen. fol. 76, 3, and 36, 3, "The whole congregation of Israel have need of atonement for the sin of the first Adam, for he was reckoned as the whole congregation."

§ 13. Now as it regards the second part of original sin, called depravity, they call it *yetzer hara*, i. e. the evil imagination. Gen. 6:5. 8:21. "Orlah," i. e. uncircumcised. Deut. 10:16. "'Tama," an unclean thing; for David said, "Create in me a clean heart;" from whence it follows that the heart of itself is unclean. Ps. 51:12. This corruption is derived from Adam; "When Adam sinned he drew upon him a defiled power, and defiled himself and all the people of the world." Zohar. Gen. fol. 37:1. It is incorporated with our nature. He brings it with him into the world. For in Tract. Sanhed. fol. 91, it is asked, "From what time does the evil concupiscence bear rule in a man? from the time of his birth, or from the time of his conception and forming in the womb?" The answer is, "From the time of his conception and forming in the womb:" and Kimchi, in Ps. 51,

thus illustrates it: "He that sows a bitter berry, that bitterness becomes natural unto the tree and unto the fruit that grows thereon." With respect to its extent, Menass. Ben Israel saith, "This vitiosity and contagion, proceeding from the sin of our first parents, have invaded both the faculties of our rational souls, both the understanding and the will." Pref. to his book, *De fragilitate humana*. Lastly, as it respects its growth and duration; it grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength. In *Beresh. Rab.* it is said, "So long as the righteous live they wage war with their concupiscence." Its growth is thus represented: "At first it is like a spider's thread, but at last like a cart rope." Isa. 5: 18. 59: 5. Again, "In the beginning it is like a *stranger*, then as a *guest*, but lastly as a *master* of the house." Dear Benjamin, I might have greatly increased the number of testimonies, but these may suffice to show that the doctrine of original sin is not a "novel, nor a cunningly devised fable." In my next letter I will give you more testimonies from eminent Christian authors. Farewell.

Letter XII.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. I will now give you a few extracts from some eminent Christian writers. In the ninth Article of the Church of England it is said "that *original sin* is the *fault* and *corruption* of the *nature* of *every* man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his *own na-*

ture inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth *always* contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into the world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

§ 2. In the book of Homilies, on the misery of men, part 2, it is thus written: "Of ourselves and by ourselves we have *no* goodness, help, or salvation; but contrariwise, sin, damnation, and death everlasting; which if we deeply weigh and consider, we shall the better understand the great mercy of God, and how our salvation cometh *only* by Christ. For in ourselves (as of ourselves) we find nothing whereby we may be delivered from this miserable captivity into which we are cast, through the envy of the devil, by *breaking of God's commandment in our first parent Adam*. We are all become unclean, but we are *not able* to cleanse ourselves, nor make one another of us clean. We are by nature the children of God's wrath, but we are *not able* to make ourselves the children and inheritors of God's glory. We are sheep that have run astray, but we cannot of our own power come again to the sheepfold; so great is our imperfection and weakness."

§ 3. The sentiment of the Assembly of Divines, who met at Westminster and compiled the Shorter Catechism,*

* In referring to this little book, notwithstanding my views as a Baptist differing with respect to the church and its ordinances, yet I cannot restrain myself from expressing my feeble testimony in its favor, although I know it is far, very far, above my commendation. From the lives of the authors, it appears that they were an Assembly, perhaps the most judicious, learned, and godly that has met since the apostolic age. For the book itself, though written by uninspired, and therefore fallible men, who do not pretend to perfection, yet for conciseness, accuracy, and comprehensiveness, it is an incomparable system. No lover of truth can peruse it with attention without admiring the accuracy and precision with which the compilers express the truth in opposition to error, ancient and modern, the natural order in which they arrange the numerous articles of our holy religion, and the perspicuity with which they delineate both its doctrines and its duties. I have derived more benefit from reading this little book, explained in *Fisher's Catechism*, than from all others I have read besides the precious Bible.

may be learned from their answers to the questions 22 to 26, which are as follows: "The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in that first transgression." "The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery." "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, which is commonly called *original* sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions." "Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin." Bishop Beveridge saith, "Adam was not only the first, but the head of all men; as he was at first all men that were in the world *formally*, so he was all men that should be in the world *representatively*; so that God looked upon Adam as upon one in whom all the generations that ever should live upon earth were represented; and so all men that should be, were present unto God in that one man that then was."

§ 4. Having explained the nature of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and proved the truth of the doctrine by Scripture, fact, and testimonies, I shall close this letter with a few observations *in vindication of this doctrine*. Many hard things have been said both against God and against those who believe this doctrine, which I shall not trouble you with, but observe,

§ 5. 1. That the doctrine of imputation is matter of fact, as has been shown. Though no reason for it could be assigned, it exists; and as it is a part of God's government, it becomes us to adore what we cannot comprehend. He sees just reason for it, though we should not perceive any.

We ought also to receive and believe it, because sacred Scripture asserts it.

§ 6. 2. A right view of the doctrine may tend, in some degree, to obviate the objections of unreasonableness. We are not to view imputation *apart* from other branches of doctrine, but every thing in its proper order. Evil dispositions, then transgression, then guilt contracted, then punishment. The same order is observed in Adam's posterity.

§ 7. 3. All men descend from Adam as a common parent. They are as intimately connected with him as streams with the fountain, and branches with the tree. Mankind are naturally in such a state as Adam when he propagated them. Evil dispositions in the root flow to the branches; guilt in the root is diffused to the branches too; depravity and punishment proceed from the root to the branches. If we had existed all at once with Adam in this connection, such would have been the consequences. Difference of time does not alter circumstances.

§ 8. 4. Adam was the representative and federal head of the whole human race. The covenant was made with him for himself and for his posterity. If he stood, they would be happy; if he fell, they would be involved in misery. Now this was a reasonable institution, for Adam was likely to stand; he had sufficient power. A sense that the happiness of millions was depending on him, and that he carried in himself the fortunes of all his posterity, was a powerful motive to obedience, and would make him more careful. Besides, man was God's creature: the blessings pronounced in the covenant were God's, and he might bestow them on what condition he thought proper. Man had no claim to them but from God's promise and covenant. Nay, it was a gracious as well as a reasonable institution. Happiness was proposed on easy terms: the blessedness of all to be secured by Adam's obedience, whereas God might have put each to trial. Besides, we are not to judge of the equity and grace of a dispensation by the issue. If

Adam stood, we would not have complained, but have admired the grace of the covenant. But we observe,

§ 9. 5. The same method of dealing among men is not accounted unreasonable. If a king loses his throne, his children are involved in the loss.

§ 10. 6. This mode of procedure is exceedingly common in the divine government and the ordering of dispensations of providence, and we never think it unjust. The merit of one procures benefit to others, and demerit procures evil to others. *Inferiors derive good or evil from superiors; people from magistrates; subjects from kings.* These observations are sanctioned by the writings of all orthodox divines. It may not be improper, however, to state the sentiment of two men, who, I may affirm, were not inferior to any in talents, judgment, and piety.

§ 11. The first is from Dr. Goodwin, who saith, "It is an equal rule, that by the same law, by virtue of which one may come to receive good freely, he should, upon the same terms, receive the contrary evil deservedly upon offending. As Job said, 'Shall we receive good from God and not evil?' So may we say here, should we have received the happy fruits of Adam's obedience, if he had stood? and should we not receive the contrary if he fell, through the guilt of his sin? If God had made the law only to have received evil upon his offending, who could have found fault? much less when he put him into an estate which would have proved so happy for us if we had not offended." Vol. 3, 18.

§ 12. The sentiment of the other is that of an eminent lawyer, who was well skilled in the nature of laws and penalties, and the reasons of them: I mean Lord Chief Justice Hale. "God made man righteous at first," saith he, "and gave him a righteous law; and inasmuch as man owed an infinite subjection to the Author of his being, he owed an exact obedience to this law of his Maker. Yet God was pleased to give him this law, not only as the rule of his obedience, but as a covenant of life and death, wherein

the first man made a stipulation for himself and his posterity; and this was just, for he had in himself the race of all mankind. All succeeding generations are but pieces of Adam, who had not, nor could have, their being but from him, and so it was but *reasonable* and *just* for him to contract for all his posterity; and as it was just in respect of the person contracting, so it was in respect of the manner of the contract. The law, which was his covenant, was a just and righteous law; a law suitable to the endowments and power of his nature. Again, the blessedness which, by his obedience, he was to hold, was not of his own creating or obtaining: it was the free gift of God; and it is but reasonable that the Lord of this gift might give it in what manner he pleased; and it could not be unjust that the Lord who gave him this blessedness, should give it him under what conditions he pleased; but he gave it him under most reasonable and just conditions, viz. an obedience to a most just and reasonable law, which united with the ability and perfection of his nature. And therefore, when, upon the breach of the covenant by man, he withdrew that blessedness from him and his posterity, he did no more than what was most just for him to do. And thus we stand guilty of that sin which our first father committed, and are deprived of that blessedness and life which our first father had; and the privation of that blessedness and immortality is death."—*Meditation on the Lord's Prayer.*

Pardon me, my dear Benjamin, for detaining you so long. My only apology is the importance of the subject. The subject itself is truly melancholy; but let us rejoice that he who, in infinite wisdom, has permitted the entrance of sin, has also, in infinite goodness, provided a sovereign and perfect remedy. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John, 3 : 16.

Farewell.

Letter XIII.

MISERY OF FALLEN MAN.

Dear Brother,

Sensible that the importance of the last three letters would require more time than usual for reading, meditation, and prayer, I have delayed the present longer than otherwise I should have done. I will now give you a very brief statement of the inexpressible and indescribable misery of man in his fallen state. But before I enter on that subject I would observe,

§ 1. 1. That the guilt of original sin is greatly increased by numberless actual transgressions, which will sink us into an abyss of everlasting misery, unless pardoned through the blood of the Messiah. We are "transgressors from the womb;" have been adding sin to sin, and iniquity to iniquity; so that, if we could reckon them all up, O how vast the sum! they may fitly be compared to the sand upon the sea-shore for multitude. Who can draw up the catalogue of his sins, and enumerate every instance of guilt? Who can reckon his sins of omission and sins of commission—sins of thought, word, and deed—secret and public sins—sins attended with peculiar aggravations, committed against light and knowledge, against conviction and love—sins in every character and relation in life, who can reckon them up?

§ 2. 2. We observe, next, that it is not more certain that men have sinned, than that they will be punished. Sin and misery are inseparable. God cannot but hate sin, which offers the vilest indignity to all the perfections of his nature, dishonors him in all his relations, breaks the order which he had established in the universe, and throws contempt on his wise and righteous constitution. And as God cannot

but hate sin, so his justice requires that he should punish it. As the perfection of his nature requires that he should have an implacable aversion for sin, so the same perfection requires that justice be not appeased without punishment. The certainty of punishment is further evident from the declaration of Jehovah, "that the soul that sinneth shall die," and many others of the same nature. Now as God hath passed his word that death should be the punishment of sin, his veracity stands engaged to make his word good. The sentence was immutable, and the word that went out of God's mouth must stand. Should sin go without the threatened and merited punishment, the faithfulness and righteousness of God in regard to his word could not be justified; "for God cannot lie, or deny himself." Speaking on this subject, pious Mr. Charnock observes, "Since God in his wisdom had settled this law, and the threatening had passed his royal and immutable word, it was no longer arbitrary, but necessary, by the sovereign authority, that either the sinner himself, or some surety in his stead, should suffer the death the sinner had incurred by the violation of the precept; we must either pay ourselves, or some other pay for us, what we stand bound in to the justice of God. Impunity had been an invasion of God's veracity, which is as immutable as his nature; since, therefore, the inflicting of death upon transgression was the real intent of God, upon the commission of sin death must enter upon man, otherwise God would be a disregarder of himself, and his threatnings a mere scare-crow."

§ 3. But I will now proceed to describe the misery of fallen man, which cannot be expressed in a better manner than in the words of the Assembly's Catechism, viz. "That all men by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever." On each of these particulars I will detain my dear Benjamin only for a few moments.

§ 4. 1. By sin we have lost communion with God. "For how can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos, 3 : 3. Sin is so dishonorable to God that it provokes him to withhold the light of his countenance from the soul, and stop all comfortable communion. Hence when God did not save our fathers or hear their cries, it was not because he was incapable of doing it, but because "their iniquities had separated between them and their God, and their sins hid his face from them, that he *would not* hear." Isa. 59 : 1, 2. Thus man lost God, Eph. 2 : 12, the greatest of all losses. He is the cause and fountain of all good; and the loss of him must be the loss of every thing that is good and excellent. "In his favor is life," "and his loving kindness is better than life." Ps. 30 : 5. 63 : 3.

§ 5. 2. Sin brings us under the wrath and curse of God Almighty. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, saith of himself as well as of them, "We were by nature children of wrath, even as others." Eph. 2 : 3. He also informs us "that Christ came to deliver us from the wrath to come." Gal. 3 : 13. God was once a friend, but sin has broken the bond of friendship, and turned God's *smile* into a *frown*. "He that believeth not on the Son of God," saith the Savior, "shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John, 3 : 36. Wrath in God is not a passion, as in us, but it is an act of God's holy will, whereby he abhors sin. The greatness of this misery none can tell. "For," saith the Psalmist, "who knows the power of God's wrath?" Ps. 90 : 11. "The wrath of a king," saith Solomon, "is as the roaring of a lion." Prov. 19 : 12. How did *Haman's* heart tremble when the king rose up from the banquet in *wrath*? Esther, 7 : 7. But God's wrath is infinite; all other is but as a spark to a flame. With the wrath of God is connected the curse of the law. "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." Prov. 3 : 33. Again, it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Deut. 27 :

26. Gal. 3 : 10. God's curse is the binding over of the sinner to all the direful effects of his wrath. When Shimei cursed David, David replied, "Let him curse me." And such would be our duty ; for we are taught by our blessed Savior, both by precept and example, saying, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you ;" Matt. 5 : 44 ; and when nailed to the cross he prayed for his murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke, 23 : 34. Besides, the curse imprecated by our fellow-creatures can do us no harm as long as we have the approbation of heaven. Hence when king Balak would have raised Balaam to the highest honor, and rewarded him with the half of his kingdom, if he would but "curse Jacob and defy Israel ;" the prophet, however willing to earn the wages of sin, was compelled to say, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed ? and how shall I defy whom God hath not defied ?" Numb. 23 : 8. But when Jehovah curses a creature, he is cursed indeed. As "the blessing of the Lord makes rich, and addeth no sorrow unto it ;" so the curse of God makes miserable, and leaves no comfort. Of these curses the following are only a few: "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do." Deut. 28 : 15-20. Hence we perceive that sin imbitters our common mercies, sharpens our afflictions, turns our very table into a snare unto us, and brings down the curse of God upon our persons and upon all we do. You know, my brother, how our people dread even to *hear* these curses read out of the law ; for when the section of the law is read in the synagogue

on the Sabbath day, whilst it is considered a high privilege to be called up to stand at the right hand of the reader to pronounce a certain blessing, yet on the Sabbath in which the section is read which contains the curses, none is willing to go up, and a person is generally paid for standing at the reader's side whilst he pronounces those curses. Now, although this savors much of superstition, for the reader's pronouncing these curses will no more make us cursed than our not going up will deliver us from the curse of the law due to our transgressions, yet it shows their ideas of the awful misery contained in those maledictions. Nor indeed is it possible for any finite mind to conceive of the wretched condition of a sinner cursed of God, whose favor is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life, but whose wrath none can bear. Dear reader, remember it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3 : 10. O flee to Jesus, "who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." Gal. 3 : 13. O "escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape" "to Jesus for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us," "lest thou be consumed." Gen. 19 : 17. Heb. 6 : 18. But the purport of the maledictory sentence of the broken law, and the nature as well as the extent of the punishment to which it dooms guilty sinners, will appear from the remaining part of the answer, viz. "that we are liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever."

§ 6. "The miseries of this life." The moment man sinned he began to suffer both in soul and body. Affecting, indeed, is the account which the sacred history gives us of the consequences of the fall, "Jehovah said unto the woman, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be toward thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto

the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3: 16-19.

§ 7. A full enumeration and detail of the temporal miseries and maladies to which sin has exposed fallen man, would far exceed the limits of this letter. They attend man in all the *stages of life*, from his birth to his death. It has justly been observed, that "man is born crying, lives complaining, and dies disappointed from the world." These miseries attend men also in all *stations and conditions* of life, from the monarch on the throne to the beggar that sits on the dunghill. Who can enumerate the maladies and distempers to which we are liable? The following are but a few of them: "The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew. The Lord shall smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerald, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head." Deut. chap. 28. To what reproach and shame, as well as bodily pain, are mankind exposed in the world! How frequently are they called to suffer poverty and want, hunger and thirst, as well as reproach.

§ 8. There are *internal* as well as *external* miseries of this life. The soul, the principal part of man, the chief

seat of corruption, must be the principal subject of misery. With all the powers and faculties of our souls have we sinned. No wonder, then, if we suffer in all the powers of our souls, as well as in all the parts of our bodies. Of these inward *spiritual* miseries, the larger Catechism mentions—"Blindness of mind;" Satan blinds men's eyes that they might not receive the light of the Gospel. "A reprobate sense," left of God, so as to have no sense of discerning betwixt good and evil, but taking bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. "Strong delusions;" forsaking the truth, they doat upon the fancies and imaginations of their own hearts, and embrace lies for solid truths. "Hardness of heart;" hardened against the fear of the Lord, and proof against conviction and means used for awakening them. "Vile affections;" eagerly desiring sin and vanity, and all manner of filthiness, without regard to the dictates of reason and a natural conscience. To these may be added, slavery to Satan; fear, sorrow, and horror of conscience, which torment men, embitter life, and often bring death in their train. This leads me to notice the next particular mentioned in the Assembly's Caetchism, viz.

§ 9. "Death itself." In explaining the threatening of the Covenant, it was observed that death was natural, spiritual, and eternal. But as death, in the answer, is distinguished both from the miseries of this life, on the one hand, and from the pains of hell on the other hand, it must denote *natural* death. By natural death, as has been mentioned in a former letter, we mean the actual dissolution of the mysterious union between the soul and the body, and the temporary separation of these two constituents of our nature. Sooner or later all the living must die. The soul leaves the body, the man falls into the hands of the king of terrors, and goes down to the house appointed for all living. Thus end the miseries of *this life*, but not the miseries of *the sinner*. For the answer mentions in the last place, that sin exposes us to,

§ 10. The misery or "the pains of hell for ever." Sin

not only renders life uncomfortable, but, if not pardoned, death and eternity too ; nay, it gives death a sting which will be destructive of our everlasting peace, and will pierce our souls through with everlasting sorrow. O my dear Benjamin, think of the punishment of sin ! the everlasting separation from all outward enjoyments ; “the everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power ;” “the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness.” A gnawing “worm that dieth not.” “A fire that can never be quenched.” “Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.” The society of the “devil and his angels.” “A lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” See, amongst others, the following passages : Job, 7 : 10. 2 Thess. 1 : 9. Matt. 25 : 30. Mark, 9. 44. Rom. 2 : 5, 9. Matt. 25 : 41. Rev. 20 : 10. The words of the apostle, generally applied to the future happiness of the righteous, are equally true concerning the future misery of the wicked : “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that” *hate* “him.” 1 Cor. 2 : 9. A celebrated Latin poet, speaking of the wicked in the infernal world, saith, “that if he had an hundred mouths, and an hundred tongues, he could not express the one half of their misery.” The misery of hell is greatly increased by its duration. It is without end. As long as the righteous enjoy felicity in heaven, so long will the wicked suffer misery in hell. The same word is used, in the *original*, by our Lord himself, to express the *one* and the *other*. Matt. 25 : 46. Blessed be God, who sent his only “Son to deliver us from the wrath to come.” One or two letters more, my dear Benjamin, and we shall leave the *first Adam*, and consider “the *second Adam* from heaven, who gave himself a ransom to deliver us from going down into the pit of destruction.’

Farewell.

Letter XIV.

MAN'S INABILITY.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. In closing my last, I mentioned that we should have only one or two letters more, and then be favored with the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness. But as it is frequently observed that about the breaking of day it is the darkest, so you will observe, that this and the following letter, which are to introduce the morning Star and light of the world, is the darkest and most gloomy. We have already considered the fall of our first parents, and the misery which thereby came upon themselves and upon their posterity. I now propose to show the utter impossibility of salvation, had not God interposed with the promise of a Savior.

When *Adam* was expelled from Paradise, the entrance was guarded by a flaming sword, to signify that all hopes of return, by the way of *nature*, are cut off for ever. That this is the case will appear, if we consider what is necessary for the restoration of man to happiness. This may be expressed in two words, viz. *Justification* and *Sanctification*. The former includes pardon of sin and a title to eternal life, the latter a deliverance from the power of sin and a fitness for the everlasting enjoyment of God. Now, man is utterly unable to accomplish either.

§ 2. 1. He cannot procure the pardon of sin, for he can make no satisfaction for it. We have already seen that all have sinned in Adam, and are also guilty of innumerable actual transgressions. We have also shown that sin and punishment are inseparable. God, who hath threatened, is bound by his own word to inflict the threatened punishment. Now, if satisfaction for sin is to be made, it must be by *death*; because man, upon his revolt from God, was, by the immuta-

ble law, bound over to death. Now, either man must perish for ever, or some one, who was not obnoxious to that penalty by nature, should suffer, in his stead, that death which he owed.

§ 3. That the slaying of a multitude of beasts *could ever atone* for sin, and that they were never instituted for that purpose, I shall show in a future letter. For the present, one passage of Scripture may suffice; Micah, 6: 6, 7. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" A God of infinite goodness delights not in shedding the blood of his creatures, nor can we suppose him to be pleased with the effusion of the blood of animals. The institution of the legal sacrifices could not be exemplary to man, nor expiatory to God. What virtue could the pangs of a dying beast represent to him? No other ends can be imagined but an acknowledgment of guilt, the desert of sin, the debt of death, the necessity of a higher satisfaction, and the raising the worshippers up to a faith in the promise of God, that another valuable sacrifice should be put in the room of the sinner, to take away that sin which the blood of beasts and the eternal groans of men were not able to remove. On this subject, however, I need not to enlarge, for sacrifices have ceased for ages past, and our nation acknowledge that they dare not offer any till they shall have returned again to the land of promise, and built again a temple unto the Lord.

§ 4. In the meanwhile, to oppose the Christian belief of the necessity of atonement, and to give an answer to the inquiry, "how shall man be just with God?" some of our modern writers, as well as authors of other religious denominations, have boldly asserted "that sacrifices were

never required to procure the pardon of sin, and that repentance alone is always sufficient." This opinion has been refuted, in a masterly manner, by that pious divine and profound Hebrew scholar, the Rev. J. Oxlee, in his fourth letter to S. M. one of our Jewish brethren and correspondent in the Jewish Repository, vol. 2, page 462. As you may not have an opportunity of seeing that work, I shall take the liberty of transcribing as much as is necessary to the present subject.

§ 5 "Sir,—The next erroneous statement, on which I beg to animadvert, in your objections to the Messiahship of Jesus, is to the following effect: 'For, according to our faith, a strict and due observance of the Decalogue and precepts, as ordained by the Almighty, in the law he gave to his chosen people, the Jews, is the only intermediate medium, or mediator, that they require to ensure their salvation in the future state; and they offer in proof thereof, how great a sinner king David was, and yet sincere repentance was the only mediating medium that procured him the Almighty's forgiveness; for, as Jews, they would deem it to imply mutability in the Supreme, were they to entertain any belief that sincere contrition and repentance does *now* require a mediator to render it acceptable to the Almighty. Such are the opinions of the Jews on this head, and such are mine.' "

(This is a quotation from S. M.'s letter, Jewish Rep. v. 2, p. 148, 285.) "Though the doctrine here inculcated is somewhat confusedly expressed, the meaning I take to be that, with the Jew, a perfect conformity to the law of Moses will ensure his salvation in the next world; and that, for every violation of the divine precepts, whereby eternal life should seem to have been forfeited, no other atonement or expiation either now is, or ever was required by the Almighty, than sincere repentance; for the proof of which an allusion is made to the pardon which king David obtained in the affair of Bathsheba. There is not, perhaps, a question of more vital importance to mankind, nor one which

requires a higher degree of learning and candor in order to a right and successful discussion of it, than the manner in which, most agreeably to the will of God, expiation is to be made for sin and transgression. That the Jews of the *present age* uniformly inculcate, that for every species of sin and transgression, sincere repentance and contrition are a full and satisfactory atonement, I readily grant ; but that this notion is repugnant to the analogy of faith, to the patriarchal and Mosaic institutions, to the express testimonies of Scriptures, to the positions of the Talmud, as well as the assertions of several of the most celebrated writers of the Jewish church, I will endeavor to establish on the most unexceptionable evidence.

“Before I proceed, however, to the general question, I shall invalidate the only apparent proof which you have been able to alledge, of contrition and repentance being clearly accepted by God, without the intervention of sacrifice as an atonement for sin. The pardon to which reference is made in the case of king David, though you have not expressly declared it, is doubtless in the matter of Bathsheba, as that is the only instance in which he deviates so far from inculpability of conduct.

“The circumstance is thus recorded in our English version: ‘And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, the Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.’ 2 Sam. 12 : 13. That part of the *pasuk* which relates to the pardon, is thus expounded by R. Isaac Abarbinel: ‘But with respect to the answer of Nathan, who says, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die;” I think, that, as David had said, “I have sinned against the Lord,” meaning that the sin had reference to Jehovah himself, and that in his hand were atonement and forgiveness; so Nathan rejoined, true it is that every thing is in the hand of the Lord; and because mercy and forgiveness are in his hand, he hath put away thy sin, so that thou shalt not die. And this he

said, because that, when David heard the parable from the mouth of the prophet, he exclaimed, as the Lord liveth, this man is guilty of death; and therefore Nathan said, according to thine own verdict, thou hast decided and confessed that thou art guilty of death; but the Lord, in decreeing concerning thee, hath put away thy sin, so that thou shalt not die; for he hath not decreed against thyself, that thou shouldst die; but only against thy sons, and thy wives; and ~~this~~ he hath done, because all things are from him, and through him; and because he hath a tenderness for thee *before* the decree. The words, therefore, of the text, "the Lord also hath put away thy sin," are *not* to be expounded as *consequent* on the confession, but as *antecedent* to this, and as taking place at the time of the decree, when death was not awarded him, because the Lord had a tender regard for him. Indeed it is evident, that the *confession* and *repentance* of David did *not* remove those punishments which had been awarded against him; though, by virtue of his repentance, his iniquities were expiated, and he was rescued from the hands of Absalom, and returned to his kingdom.' Com. in loc.

"Now, if any deference is to be paid to the authority of Abarbinel, the pardon which David obtained by the mouth of the prophet was not in consideration of his sorrow and repentance, but of that exuberant kindness which he had shown him from God; for, though the same author hath subjoined, that, by virtue of this repentance, his iniquities were forgiven him, it can only be meant that the blood of atonement was thereby rendered efficacious to the purgation of his guilt, as he lived under the Mosaic economy, and availed himself of that great day of atonement, of which the Jew, ever since the destruction of the temple, has been wholly deprived.

"There is not, indeed, in the whole volume of Scripture, any evidence, either direct or indirect, that remission of sins was, under any age of the world, to be obtained by contri-

tion and repentance. During the patriarchal dispensation we read of sacrifices having been offered for the purpose, as is reasonably supposed, of appeasing the wrath of God, and of conciliating his favor; but nowhere do we read that the efficacy of repentance was such as to be a substitute for sacrifice. In the Mosaic dispensation there was no atonement without the shedding of blood; on the contrary, it was by virtue of his oblation only, and not by his sorrow and contrition, that the pardon of the culprit was obtained, and his guilt obliterated. Nor have the prophets affirmed any thing to the prejudice of this doctrine. Their frequent calls to repentance are not to be understood of mere invitations to the people to reflect on their ways, and to be sorry for what was past; but as strenuous exhortations to the strict and punctual discharge of the ritual, as well as of the moral precepts; a considerable part of which consisted in the due and regular performance of sacrifice for sin and transgression. R. Saul Ben R. Arjeleb has attested the truth of this position in more places than one. These are his words: 'For it is evident there is no atonement except by blood.' *Binyan Ariel*, fol. 30. Again, in another preceding column of the same work, 'there is no ground of atonement except by blood.' Thus we find the Jew and the Christian maintaining the same language; that by sacrifice only, and nothing else, can sin be canceled and guilt obliterated.

"Indeed, that repentance is no ground of atonement, though highly pleasing to God in our fallen and sinful condition, and even necessary to the right performance of every sacrifice, is demonstrable on the authority of the Talmud, which inculcates, that for all transgressions, not legally expiated by instant sacrifice, the culprit, however intense or sincere his repentance might be, could obtain no pardon till the great day of atonement; that, for certain sins of a flagrant complexion, it was wholly unavailable; and that, for others of a trivial nature, it was absolutely unnecessary. For every violation of the divine law, and for all sins whatever,

committed against God, the victims slain on the great day of atonement, together with the emissary goat, made a full and sufficient expiation of themselves, except in one or two cases, in which it would have been highly presumptuous on the part of the offender to expect any atonement, without the most unfeigned repentance accompanying the expiation; and in matters of wrong between one man and another, where, to render the atonement of any avail, restitution and satisfaction were first to be made.

“ That this is a correct statement of the manner in which remission of sins was obtained under the Mosaic dispensation, is apparent from the Mishna, *Masecheth, Shebuoth*, Perek I. ‘ Moreover, for the willful defiling of the sanctuary and its holy things, the goat which was disposed of within, and the day of atonement, made expiation; but for the other transgressions detailed in the law, whether light or heavy; whether committed in wantonness or in ignorance; whether with the knowledge of the thing eaten, or without the knowledge of it; whether against an affirmative or negative precept; whether amounting to the penalty of excision, or of death inflicted by the sanhedrim; the emissary goat makes expiation.’

“ In this place there is no mention of the repentance of the culprit as a condition of the atonement being accepted, much less, according to the Jews of the present age, is its efficacy asserted to be of such avail as to procure for the offender the remission of his guilt without the medium of a sacrifice. Seeing, then, that for several gross sins repentance is denied to be of any avail; that for others of a less enormous complexion it is not thought necessary; and that, even in those few cases where it cannot be dispensed with, it sustains not the character of an atoning medium, but is merely the condition on which the expiatory sacrifice becomes efficacious; I am authorised (saith Mr. Oxlee) to contend, that the modern Jewish doctrine of repentance being self-sufficient for the expiation of all sin and transgression, is at variance with

the Scriptures, as well as with the Talmud ; and has every appearance of having been dictated by the exigency of the circumstances in which the Jew is now placed, without any regard whatever to the real principles of Judaism. I cannot, therefore, but come to a very opposite conclusion with yourself on this important point ; that it would imply mutability in the Supreme Being, were the Jews to expect that the most sincere contrition and repentance could now procure for them, whilst languishing under a state of punishment, the remission of their sins ; when they could not obtain it, on such easy terms, whilst living in their own land, and enjoying the privileges of the Mosaic dispensation."

Farewell.

Letter XV.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Dear Benjamin,

§ 6. To return to our subject. It is unreasonable to expect that the most sincere repentance should be able to expiate for sin. Bare grief for an offence is not a compensation for an injury done to man, much less for affronts offered to God. Besides, it is not in the power of man truly to repent. What stone was ever seen to melt itself ? No more can man break himself into true contrition. Is not captive man fond of his sin, and in love with his chains ? And how can he, by *nature*, attain that which is so contrary to what he is by nature mightily delighted with ? True repentance includes an ingenuous sorrow for sin past, and a sincere forsaking of it. God's sorrow is accompanied with

a change in heart and life; respects the stain more than the punishment of sin; and arises from love to God, who is disobeyed and dishonored by it. Man's nature must first be changed before he can thus repent; but such a change cannot take place before a satisfaction is made: for it is not reasonable that the punishment of sin, which was a spiritual as well as eternal death, and consisted in leaving the soul under the power of those ill habits it had contracted, should be taken off till some satisfaction were made. Man can no more free himself from this spiritual death, than he can free himself from the death of the body; and we have no reason to think that God would do it before a satisfaction was made, for the law he had enacted would be broken by himself.

§ 7. Neither is any man able to make satisfaction by reformation or future obedience. This is evident from man's inability to come up to the demands of the law. To be *sinner*s, and to be without *strength*, are one and the same. Rom. 5: 6, 8. God requires an obedience to the law, not according to our measure, but according to his own righteousness, which is perfect; and this no sinful creature can arrive at of himself. We have already shown that our obedience must be universal, perfect, free from all sin, and perpetual. Every divine command must be obeyed, and none neglected. Our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, who did many things, but neglected the weightier matters of the law. The curse of God stands in full force against all those "who continue not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3: 10. If one command is laid aside, all our obedience will prove insufficient to justify us. As our obedience must extend to *every* command, so the obedience of every command must be *perfect*. It must have regard to thoughts, words, and actions. Saul of Tarsus thought himself perfectly righteous till he found, it is written, "Thou shalt not covet," which convinced him that the law requires purity of *thought*, or *heart*, as well as of life. It is equally necessary that our

obedience should be *perpetual*; "We must *continue* in all things," &c. A single act, or a few acts of obedience; a day or a year's watchfulness against sin and observance of the law, will be of no avail to us. When we consider, therefore, that such is the requisition of God's holy, just, and good law, and that all men by nature are without strength to do good, and only inclined to evil, we see the propriety of the answer to the 82d question in the Assembly's Catechism: "That no mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but daily does break them in thought, word, and deed." Hence the saints, in all ages, deprecated the thought of being justified by their own works, and said with the Psalmist, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Ps. 143 : 2. And the inspired apostle more than once declared, "that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." Besides, consider, dear Benjamin, that, even if a man could in future obey, that could make no satisfaction for past offences. After obedience will not make amends for past crimes, for obedience is a debt due of itself; and what is a debt of itself, cannot be a compensation for another. Obedience was due of man if he had not sinned, and therefore is a debt as much due after sin as before it; but a new debt cannot be satisfied by paying an old one.

§ 8. Nor is any man able to satisfy for sin by the observance of the ceremonial law. For what was said by the author of the answers unto certain questions proposed to him, viz. "that spiritual deliverance dependeth *solely* on the observance of the law which God promulgated on Mount Sinai," is not true; otherwise all that died before the giving of it must have perished, and that eternally. Not only the patriarchs before the flood, some of whom had this testimony that they pleased God, and one of whom was taken alive into heaven, but our father Abraham also himself, who received the promises, must, on this supposition, be excluded

from salvation, for they observed not the law of Moses. Besides, our Rabbins have declared that Abraham and others, before the giving of the law, were saved, and saved *only* by the grace of God. Thus it is written in Bereshith Rab. sec. 29, that "even Noah himself, who was left of them that were destroyed by the flood, was not every way as he should be, but that he found grace or favor in the eyes of the Lord." And of Abraham it is said, "Thou findest that Abraham our father inherited not this world and the world to come any otherwise than by faith; as it is written, he believed God." It is therefore evident that there was an appointed and effectual remedy before the giving of the law; and if effectual for them, what need was there of another? I fear, dear brother, I have detained you already too long on this subject; yet there are many other "refuges of lies" which men have invented; but I shall notice only one more, because it is a very common one, viz.

§ 9. That by a course of sufferings, either here or hereafter, men could atone for their sins. This doctrine of *purgatory*, as I may call it, has been an article of faith amongst all heathen nations, is propagated by our Rabbins, and has too many disciples amongst Christians. But it has no foundation in the sacred Scripture, and is contrary to sound reason; for the punishment must be equal to the offence, which derives its guilt from the dignity of the person offended and the dignity of the offender. Now, God is the universal king; his justice is infinite, which man has injured, and his glory, which man has obscured; and man is finite. And what proportion is there between finite and infinite? How can a worthless rebel, who is hateful to God, expiate the offence of so excellent a majesty? Besides, how is it possible for men, whose natures are depraved, and have nothing of a divine purity in them, to satisfy by sufferings, since they suffer not only for sin, but in a sinful state, and are increasing their sins while they are paying their satisfactions? No suffering of any that retain their rebellious nature can

be satisfaction to the majesty of God, so as to free such a creature from suffering while that nature remains, and he loves that sin for which he is punished, though he has not opportunity of committing it. Further, since man by nature is enmity against God, Rom. 8: 7, God's judicial power would not render him amiable to the sinner, nor suffering inspire him with a love to his judge; if he should therefore suffer multitudes of years without any certain hope of recovery, could he be without a hatred of God? wherefore, all the time he would be suffering he would be highly sinning, and still sinning would increase the debt of suffering instead of diminishing it. It is therefore evident, dear Benjamin, that man is unable to make satisfaction for his past sins, and needs a justifying righteousness from some other quarter.

§ 10. 2. But suppose even that it were consistent for God to pardon our sins without a satisfaction, or that it were in the power of man to work out a righteousness of his own; yet man would still remain wretched and miserable, utterly unfit for the service or enjoyment of God, either here or hereafter, unless his nature be renewed and sanctified. The consideration of this part of the subject shall close this letter.

§ 11. That such a change is absolutely necessary we are repeatedly taught in the sacred Scriptures. It is asserted that "except we are born again we cannot see the kingdom of heaven;" and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The circumcision of the heart was as much required as the circumcision of the flesh. Without the latter, the sons of Abraham, as well as the strangers, were excluded from the congregation of Israel; and without the former, the sinner is excluded from the church of God. It is also evident, from reason and experience, that there are certain and appropriate qualifications requisite to the exercise of certain duties and employments, to join, with pleasure and satisfaction to ourselves and others, the society and

company of different classes of people, and to relish certain peculiar pleasures. Now, unless man is changed in his nature, he is unfit for the society, the employments, and the enjoyments of heaven.

§ 12. But this change is not more necessary than it is out of the power of man to effect it. Of this we shall be easily convinced, if we consider the awful and powerful influence which sin has over every faculty of the soul, and in all the members of the body, as has been already briefly stated in a former letter. Man's understanding is so much blinded that he cannot discern things as he ought. "He calls evil good, and good evil." Isa. 5 : 20. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are *foolishness* unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2 : 14. This is the case with all, "for there is none that understandeth." Rom. 3 : 11. Hence it is that all the representations which are made of sin, of holiness, of Christ, and of spiritual things, to the natural man are absolutely lost, and therefore without any saving effect, as he sees no real importance, excellency, or suitableness in them.

As the understanding is blinded by sin, so the will is absolutely in subjection to it. Man chooses nothing but sin, can delight in nothing else, and is full of the bitterest enmity to, and strongest prejudices against the ways and things of God. See, among others, the following passages : Rom. 8 : 7. Eph. 4 : 18. Job, 15 : 25, 26.

The affections of the soul are equally under the power of sin. There is no mourning for sin, no joy in God, no fear of him, no love to him, but every affection is turned from its proper object, and going aside readily and fully from God.

The memory is led captive by sin. Man likes not to retain God in his mind. He has an aversion to listen to things spiritual, heavenly, and holy, and the memory is unfaithful in retaining the knowledge of them. The con-

science, also, is hardened through sin. It stands out against every awful threatening, and desperately outbraves hell and damnation. In a word, if man is to make himself fit for the enjoyment of happiness, he must conquer not only flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places. He must enlighten his understanding, turn the bias of his will, the edge of his desires, and choose, pursue, and delight in that which sin and Satan have given him the deepest enmity to, and the strongest prejudices against. Well may we exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Such, my dear Benjamin, is the awful and helpless situation of all mankind. Angels, indeed, might have pitied us, but they could not save us. But blessed be God "who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever." "He chose one out of the people mighty to save." Of him I shall with pleasure speak in my next letter.

Farewell.

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away :
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

PART II.

THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT OF A MEDIATOR.

Letter I.

A MEDIATOR APPOINTED.

Dear Brother Benjamin,

§ 1. Never have I taken up my pen with greater pleasure than on the present occasion. O how my soul has longed to communicate to you the subject of this letter! It is inexpressibly delightful to be the bearer of good news. But what good news can be compared to the joyful sound of the Gospel? Yes, my beloved brother, glad tidings! glad tidings of great joy! "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth good will towards men." "The Lord has made a covenant with his chosen." In my last letter I have endeavored to point out the truly deplorable and *helpless* condition of man; yet, blessed be the Lord, it is not a *hopeless* condition. "What is impossible with man, is possible with God."

§ 2. Agreeably to my promise, I will now give you a scriptural account of the *Divine Appointment of a Mediator*. I say *scriptural*, for, as it has been observed respecting the covenant between the great God and the father of the human race, that it was a matter of *pure revelation*, so it is with respect to the covenant or economy of redemption now under consideration; an economy incomparably more glorious and more ancient—a covenant between the **Eternal Father** and his **Eternal Son**, for the redemption of man-

kind. This subject, you know, my dear Benjamin, is very little known amongst our people, and, alas! very few Christians have correct ideas respecting it.

§ 3. I will therefore show, 1. The *reality* of such a covenant. In the illustration and confirmation of this subject, which relates to things which should come to pass, I shall confine myself wholly to the Old Testament. To point out all that is written in the law, in the prophets, and in the book of Psalms, would by far exceed the limits of this letter. I have therefore selected only a few passages, which I will first prove to relate to the Messiah, and then show that they establish the reality and illustrate the nature of the covenant.

§ 4. No. 1. We begin with the second Psalm.

The characters of this Psalm are such as leave us no rational ground of applying it to David, or Solomon, or any of their successors; or to any other person than to that future Sovereign, the predicted descendant in whom David trusted and rejoiced, and tuned the harps of Zion to celebrate his holy dominion. Apostolic authority, also, permits us not to hesitate in regarding it as a direct and most important prophecy of the Messiah. Nor are we at a loss for testimonies from our most ancient rabbins. The Chaldee *Targum* refers it to the Messiah. So do the *Bereshith Rab.*, the book *Yalkut*, and the other Talmudical writings almost without exception. Memorable are the words of R. Sol. Yarchi, "Our masters," says he, "have expounded (this Psalm) of the king Messiah; but, according to the letter, and for furnishing answers to the *Minim*, (i. e. heretics, or Christians,) it is better to interpret it of David himself." *Pocok*, in *Porta Mosis*, Not. 307. *Venum*, in Psalm, tom. 1. p. 49. *David Kimchi* has a passage precisely to the same effect. The ancient book *Zohar* has the following passage: "Of thee, Messiah, it is said, *kiss the Son; thou art my Son*, and he is the Prince of Israel, the Lord of the lower world, the Lord of the ministering angels, the Son of

the Most High, and the indwelling of grace." Apud *Kuinoel* in libros. N. T. Histor. vol. 3. p. 84. See also *Aben Ezra* and *Med. Tehillim* in loco. *Zohar*, Numb. fol. 82, 2. *Tal. Succath*, fol. 52, 1. *Maim. Sanhed.* c. 10.

No. 2. We notice next, Psalm 89.

Whatever differences of opinion there are respecting the penman, it is generally agreed that the Messiah is the subject. The twentieth verse is applied to him by the apostle, *Act.* 13: 22, 23, and several parts of the Psalm are applied to him by our Rabbins. See *Aben Ezra*, *Kimchi*, and *Yarchi*, on verse 51. *Sanhed.* fol. 97, 1. *Yalkut Sim.* part 2. fol. 56, 3. *Shemoth Rab.* fol. 104, 4. *Zohar*, Gen. fol. 30. 1.

The promise made to David is recited, and its provisions are detailed and dwelt upon, with all the affectionate lingerings of struggling hope and discouraging fear. The person in whom the promise remained to be fulfilled, is represented as a new David, a Son of God, a King, exalted by God his father to a dominion such as David and his posterity never knew; an empire of universal extent, conferring the greatest blessings upon its subjects, gloriously displaying the majesty of the divine perfections, and destined to continue to the end of time. "All human affairs," says a foreign divine, "are subjected to the changes of fortune." Nothing is permanent; at least, reigning families are not. Not one of those who now occupy any of the thrones of Europe, (and the European thrones have been, for the most part, more regular and stable than any other,) is a thousand years old. It is plainly, therefore, contrary to the course of all human affairs, that to the family of David an everlasting throne should be promised. In fact, it was not to be brought to pass in the ordinary course of things, but was to be accomplished in that everlasting King, who is celebrated in the 72d Psalm and the 110th.—*Michaelis Anmerk.* üb. 2 Sam. 7: 19.

No. 3. The hundred and tenth Psalm is also repeatedly applied to the Messiah, by almost all our rabbins, as well as

frequently quoted in the New Testament, as will be shown hereafter.

No. 4. Passing by, at present, Isaiah, 7 : 14, which must be fully considered hereafter, we mention Isaiah, 9 : 6, which is applied to the Messiah by the Targum ; in Devarin Rab. fol. 196, 3. By R. Jose Galilæus præfat. in Echa Rab. and Maimon. in Maji Synops, Theolog. Ind. Loc. 8. de Messiah, p. 21. See also Reuchlinum de arte Cabalæ, lib. 1. p. 745. The Chaldee paraphrase is very observable : "The prophet speaketh of the house of David, because a child is born to us, a son is given to us, and he taketh the law upon himself to observe it ; therefore his name is called from of old, Wonderful in council, God the mighty, He who abideth for ever, the Messiah, whose peace shall be abundant upon us in his days." We shall have occasion to consider this prediction more fully hereafter.

No. 5. In Isaiah, 42 : 1—4, the Messiah is described as distinguished above all the other servants and prophets of God ; the object of the most perfect divine complacency ; qualified, by the richest participation of heavenly gifts, for communicating the true religion to the world ; modest, lowly, and unassuming ; supporting and soothing the weak and afflicted ; indefatigably persevering in his arduous work of evangelizing the earth, and finally successful in it ; a conqueror and a sovereign, but one who subdues and reigns by love. In the New Testament this prediction is applied to Jesus, Math. 12 : 18—21 ; and our Rabbins have applied it to the Messiah.

The Targum on the first verse saith, "Behold, my servant the Messiah." Kimchi, on the same place, saith, "This is the king Messiah." Abarbinel interprets it of the Messiah, Mash. yeshua. fol. 9 : 1, 2 ; 10 : 1, 2 ; 21 : 2 ; and on Isaiah, fol. 64 : 3, 4. The fourth verse is applied to the Messiah by Maimon. See also R. Isaac in chiz. Emunah. fol. 299.

No. 6. The 49th of Isaiah is also applied to the Messiah in Zohar on Gen. fol. 127 : 2, and in Pesickta Rab. in Yalkut in loco.

No. 7. The next passage in course is the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which more properly ought to begin at the 13th verse of the preceding chapter. Hence the Haphtorah for Parshah Shophtim closes at the 13th verse; and the Haphtorah for Parshah Noah and Ki-Setzai begins with the 54th chapter. Why the three last verses of the 52d chapter and the whole of the 53d chapter have been *skipt over* in the selection of the Haphtorah, I leave for our Rabbins to answer. For myself I am satisfied that the motive of withholding light from the people is to keep them in darkness. This portion of sacred Scripture is too plain for any reader not to see the fulfillment of it in Jesus of Nazareth. That the whole of this prophecy was applied by our fathers to the Messiah, is acknowledged by R. Moshe Alshech, in his commentary on the place. His words are as follows: "Now it is said that, for certain, our doctors, of blessed memory, have, *with one voice*, affirmed and handed down, that it is spoken of the king Messiah; and I shall follow their authority, since it is well known that David and the Messiah are one and the same person." Aben Ezra, although he trieth to apply the prophecy to any other but the Messiah, yet confesseth "that *many* expound it of the Messiah because of the assertion of our fathers, of blessed memory, that on the day on which the sanctuary was destroyed, the Messiah was born, and is now detained in prison." Com. on Isa. 49: 13. See the Targums on Isaiah, 52: 13, and 53: 10. Sanhed. fol. 98, col. 2. Zohar in Ex. f. 85, 2. Beresh. Rab. Gen. 24: 67. Pesikta in Kettoreth hassammim in Targ. Jer. Numb. 24: 7. Tanchuma, Isa. 52: 13. Med. Ruth. f. 34: 3. Besides, the description given throughout this prophecy of *one single individual*, never hath, and never can agree with any one besides the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, as shall be shown in a future letter.

§ 4. From some of the above passages it is evident that Jehovah has made a covenant with the Messiah. In the 89th Psalm, David, in celebrating the mercy and faithful-

ness of Jehovah, traces them to the unchangeable covenant, introducing Jehovah—"I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." This refers, doubtless, to the promise of the Lord sent by the prophet Nathan unto David, "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom; he shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. 2 Sam. 7: 12, 13. That this was a prophecy relating, in a primary and partial sense, unto King Solomon, none will deny; but it is equally true that it had a second and more glorious reference to the Messiah. Hence, in proving the superiority of Jesus over the angels, the apostle quotes the last verse. An angel also declared unto Mary that "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke, 1: 32. There are many other passages of Scripture which show that there was an eternal and mutual agreement between Jehovah and the Messiah, which will be produced presently to illustrate the different parts of this covenant. We now proceed to consider—

§ 5. 2. The *nature* of this covenant. This may be partially learned from the different names by which it is called. By some it is called the Covenant of Redemption, its great design being the redemption of sinners. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. Isaiah, 59: 20. Here the Messiah is frequently called "the Redeemer of Israel," and believers are exhorted to remember that they are redeemed with precious blood. Job believed in the existence of his divine nature, and in his future incarnation. "I know that my Redeemer *liveth*, and that he shall stand at the latter

day upon the earth." Job, 19 : 25. Others prefer the appellation, the Covenant of Grace, in opposition to the Covenant of Works. It is the most illustrious display of the free, rich and abundant grace of God to a guilty world. By others again it is called a Covenant of Reconciliation and Peace; it being designed to bring about reconciliation between the offended Majesty of heaven and offending sinners of Adam's race. In the covenant of works God contracted with Adam as a friend, without the interposition of a mediator; but in this covenant man is considered as a fallen creature, a transgressor of the law, and an enemy to God. This covenant is the security of God's people. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the *covenant* of my *peace* be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah, 54 : 10.

§ 6. 3. We next observe the *parties* of this covenant. In all covenants, as we have already noticed, there must be two or more parties. In this covenant it is generally considered that the contracting parties are two, viz: the Father and the Son. My dear Benjamin will allow me to take for granted, at present, what I hope to prove hereafter in its proper place, namely, that there are three distinct persons in the one Jehovah. Now the eternal Father, and his co-eternal Son, are particularly mentioned in the Scriptures as the contracting parties, but not to the exclusion of the Holy Spirit, who hath an important part to perform, as will be seen presently.

In the sixth chapter of Zechariah, verse 9-13, we have a remarkable prophecy concerning the Messiah. "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;

and speak unto him, saying, thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the MAN whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." In this prediction the prophet truly describes, in a short, but lively manner, the person, offices and glory of the Messiah, subjoining, at last, the cause of all these; namely, why the *Messiah* appeared as such a *person*, executed such *offices* and obtained such a *glory*, namely, because of that eternal covenant which was established between him and his Father, calling it, verse 13th, the "counsel of peace."

§ 7. That the Messiah is meant by the *branch*, will not be denied. The same person is spoken of under the same title and character in ch. 3:8, which verse the Targum paraphrases thus: "Behold I will bring forth my servant, the *Messiah*." It hath also been applied to the Messiah by Kimchi, and Aben Ezra, R. Abendana in his notes, in Michlol Yophi in loco, and by R. Joshua in Echa Rab. fol. 58, c. 2. The same person, also, is called "the righteous branch," in Jer. 23:5, and 33:15; which is applied to the Messiah by the Targum, and by many others of our Rabbins: see Kimchi and R. Sal. ben. Melech in Loco, R. Isaac in Chiz. Emunah, p. 1, c. 42; who also interprets "the Lord our righteousness" of the Messiah, (ver. 6;) and so it is likewise understood by R. Yochanan in Tal. Bava Bathra, fol. 75, c. 2, by R. Aba bar Cahana in Echa Rab. f. 58, 2, by R. Sadaia Gaon, in Dan. 7:13, and in Beresh. Rab. Gen. 25:6, see gal. de Arcanis, c. v. l. 8, c. 3. In Isa. 4:2 it is said, "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautified and glorious;" which the Targum renders thus: "At that time the *Messiah* of the Lord shall

be for joy and glory;" and Kimchi also expounds it of King Messiah.

§ 8. Another passage of sacred writ which deserves our notice is Prov. 8 : 23. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." That the speaker in this text, called Wisdom, is a *person*, and not a mere *attribute* of the divine nature, is evident from the personal properties, personal acts, and personal words which are ascribed to it. Besides, none will deny that the wisdom which speaks in this chapter is the same that speaks in chapter 1st. from ver. 20 to 27. These verses I would earnestly recommend to the perusal and meditation of my dear Benjamin; and I doubt not that he will join me in approving the sentiment of the learned Dr. Owen, who saith, "If wisdom there, i. e. chap. 1, be not a person, and that a divine person, there is none in heaven. For who is it that *pours out the Holy Spirit*? who is it that *men sin against* in refusing to be obedient? who is it that in their *distress they call upon*, and seek early in their trouble? The whole Scripture declares unto whom, and unto whom *alone*, these things belong, and may be ascribed."

The word, translated here, *set up*, signifies to pour out, anoint, appoint. It is the same that is used in Ps. 2 : 6. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion, which is applied to the Messiah, as has already been shown. The holy unction poured on the head of kings, priests, or prophets, was used at their inauguration into their office. Hence we see that the Messiah did not take upon himself the honor of being the mediator, but that he was chosen, called, and appointed by the Father. To this truth our attention is called by Jehovah himself. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." Isa. 42 : 1. And no doubt, in allusion to this, the apostle, when speaking of the precious blood of Christ, by which we are redeemed, he saith, "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. 1 : 20.

§ 9. As it was necessary that the Mediator should be appointed and authorized for his work, so likewise it was necessary that he should act voluntarily, and give his consent. As it was the free and sovereign pleasure of the Father to provide a Savior for guilty men when he passed by the fallen angels, so it was the result of the Son's own will to assume our nature and become our kinsman and Redeemer. Thus it is written, Ps. 40 : 6-8, "Mine ears hast thou opened, or bored," alluding to the custom used under the ceremonial law, by which the willing servant was signified to be obliged, by his own consent or choice, to serve his master for ever. To this appointment the Son replied, "Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." To the same purpose the Messiah is introduced, saying, "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away my back." Isa. 50 : 5. The Messiah, being equal with the Father, could not be compelled, against his will, to undertake the work of redemption, but he did it cheerfully. Hence the Messiah assures us "that his delights were with the sons of men from the foundation of the world." Prov. 8 : 31.

Hence it was no more "unjust" or "cruel," when, in the fullness of time, the Father dealt with his beloved innocent Son as if he had been a servant and a criminal, than it is considered unjust or cruel in a creditor, jury, or judge, to deal with a surety as if he himself had contracted the debt for which he became security.

§ 10. 4. Having thus considered the parties contracting, we now state the *contract* itself, or the *condition* of the covenant. It hath already been stated that the great design of this covenant was the redemption or salvation of sinners. The Father there required of his Son to do all that was necessary for the sinner to be pardoned freely, sanctified wholly, and glorified eternally, consistently with all the perfections of God and the demands of his holy law. But, for order's sake, I will mention a few particulars.

§ 11. 1. The Messiah was to make known the will of his Father. We have already frequently noticed that every part belonging to salvation is matter of pure revelation. The volume of nature affords no light on this subject. The book of redemption is that sealed book which none could open or reveal but the Son of God. Hence the Messiah saith, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee: Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Ps. 2: 7, 8. He was not only to be "the glory of his people Israel," but also "a light to lighten the Gentiles." "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Isaiah, 42: 6, 7.

§ 12. 2. It was required of the Messiah that he should perfectly obey the law of God. Hence the prophet, speaking of the Messiah, saith, "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honorable." Isa. 42: 21. The holy law of God, given to man in innocency as a covenant, being violated and broken, and the authority of the great lawgiver affronted and opposed by man's disobedience, the Messiah, the second Adam, was to be made under the law, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and not only fulfill the law, both in its precept and penalty, but to magnify it and make it honorable. To add a new lustre and glory unto the law which it never had before, through the dignity of his person who should obey, it behoved the surety of this better covenant, in order to the fulfillment of the conditional part, to perform a series of universal and spotless obedience to the moral, Jewish, ceremonial and mediatorial laws, from the commencement to the conclusion of his humble state.

§ 13. 3. Another article of the covenant was, that the Messiah should make satisfaction for the numerous and aggravated offences of his people. This is one thing in which especially this covenant differs from that made with Adam. Of Adam, it was required only to obey, but the second Adam was both to obey and to die. For this covenant was made with the Messiah as the representative and surety of *sinful* men, who have not only come short of the obedience which the law requires, but, by the violation of its precepts, have incurred its penalty. Thus was the work assigned to the surety, far more arduous than that assigned to the head of the first covenant. In order that we might escape eternal death, and obtain eternal life, our surety was not only to spend a holy and meritorious life, but he was also to undergo an accursed and expiatory death. Man was a *criminal debtor*; the debt must be paid: the Messiah, by agreement, puts himself in the sinner's stead; to pay this debt, submit to the revenging arm of justice, and thereby release the prisoners. He was to be made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law; as we were under the law, so was the surety to bear the curse of the law for us; that whatsoever power the law had over us, in regard to its precepts, the Messiah was to obey; whatsoever, in regard of its curses, he was to undergo; and thus undertaking for us, he was to endure the stroke of his Father's wrath, to which we sinners were liable. As the proper and primary design of sacrifices was to expiate typically for sins, so the Messiah was to expiate really for the sins of his people; God laid their iniquities upon him, and then punished them in him; so that he bore the penalty which sinners themselves should have undergone. Man having sinned, either he himself or his surety must suffer the punishment thereby deserved. God would have sin punished somewhere; the Messiah, therefore, having put himself into the *sinner's stead*, he must bear the punishment due to the sinner. For though God would so far *release* his *law* as to admit of a substitution or com-

mutation as to the *person suffering*, yet he would have its *penalty* inflicted either upon the proper offender himself, or upon the Savior, who was willing to interpose for the offender so as to suffer what he should have suffered. Hence all those predictions which so minutely, emphatically, and pathetically speak of the Messiah as a "Man of sufferings and acquainted with grief; whose face was marred more than any man; who was smitten and stricken of God; wounded and bruised for our iniquities; pouring out his soul unto death; his soul making an offering for sin; cut off, but not for himself. His hands and feet pierced." See Ps. 22. Isa. 53. Dan. 9. Hence the awful commission of Jehovah, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Zech. 13: 7. This was the sacrifice which God required exclusively of all others as to any satisfaction. For, saith the Messiah, "Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not; in them thou hadst no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come." Ps. 40. He pronounced them utterly useless for the satisfaction of justice, though fit to prefigure the grand sacrifice intended.

§ 14. Our ancient Rabbins were not ignorant of this covenant agreement between Jehovah and the Messiah. Jehovah is introduced as addressing the Messiah thus: "Righteous Messiah, those who are hid with thee, are such whose sins in time shall bring thee into grief; thy ears shall hear reproaches, thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth; thou shalt be wearied with sorrow." The Messiah answered, "Lord of the world, I joyfully take them upon me, and charge myself with their torments; but upon this condition, that thou shalt quicken the dead in my day." "God," saith the Rabbi, "granted him this; and from that time the Messiah charged himself with all kind of torments, as it is written, Isaiah, 53: 5, he was afflicted, &c." R. Hadarshan, in Gen. 1: 1. see Charnock 2. 191. Magee on the atonement,

vol. 2. 369. Again it is said that the Messiah taketh upon himself the afflictions and punishment of Israel; and if he had not diminished or made light the afflictions, not any one in the world would have been able to bear the punishment of the law. Whilst Israel dwelt in their own land, they kept off all manner of afflictions and evil diseases by means of sacrifices; but now the Messiah takes them away, as it is written, "he was wounded for our transgression." Isa. 53 : 5. *Yalkut chadash*. No. 29, fol. 154, c. 4.

§ 15. 4. We observe once more, that it was required of the Messiah that he should employ his mighty power and extensive authority for the important purposes of God's glory and man's salvation. The people committed to his charge were not only to be purchased by his blood, but he was to make them willing in the day of his power; He should rescue them from the hand of the mighty one, should watch over them during their pilgrimage in the wilderness, and, as the true Jehovah, safely conduct them through the river Jordan, and bring them into quiet possession of the heavenly Canaan. Hence the many predictions to that purpose, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Isaiah, 40 : 11. The remainder of this subject we shall consider in our next.

But O immeasurable grace!
Th' eternal Son takes Adam's place;
Down to our world the Savior flies,
Stretches his arms, and bleeds, and dies.

Amazing work! look down, ye skies,
Wonder and gaze with all your eyes!
Ye saints below, and saints above,
All bow to this mysterious love.

Letter II.**THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.**

Dear Brother,

§ 1. 5. Having shown already the reality, nature, parties and condition of the covenant between the Father and the Son, we proceed now to notice the *promissory part* of it. As the party with whom the covenant was made comes under a *twofold* consideration, as the party *representing*, and the party *represented*, the promissory part of it must necessarily be viewed in a twofold light also, viz. as it relates to the Mediator himself, and as it relates to those whom he represents. From the Scriptures of the Old Testament it appears that the Father promised to *his Son* as follows:

§ 2. 1. To *fit* him for the work, by preparing him a human nature to be united with his divine, and by qualifying that human nature for the work the Mediator had to perform. With respect to the first, we observe, that when the covenant of works was made with the first Adam, he was furnished with sufficient strength for performing the condition of it, as has already been stated; when the second Adam was sent into the world to accomplish a superior work, he likewise was to be furnished with every necessary qualification. He needed a human nature. Hence the prophet foretold, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah, 7: 14. Nay, so certain and sure are the transactions of this covenant, that the same prophet spake of the incarnation of the Messiah as if it had taken place in his day: "For unto us a child is born, a son is given; and the government shall be upon his

shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," Isa. 9 : 6. With respect to the qualification of the human nature, there are several promises. "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Ps. 45 : 7. What the oil is with which he was to be anointed, the evangelical prophet, in more than one place, informs us: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," Isa. 11 : 2, 3. 61 : 1-3. The human nature of the Messiah being a creature, could not beautify and enrich itself with needful gifts; this promise of the spirit was therefore necessary; his humanity could not else have performed the work it was designed for.

§ 3. 2. The Father next promised to strengthen and uphold him whilst engaged in the work. Hence, in the 89th Psalm there is a precious promise to that purpose: "Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him." Ps. 89 : 19-21. We read of a similar one by the prophet Isa. 42 : 6; "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people." He promises here, in the loftiest expressions, so to strengthen him that he should not be discouraged, but should see the blessed effects of his undertaking; he would uphold him tenderly, as a father does his son, in his arms, that no hurt might happen to him. He is said, therefore, to "be made strong" by God, for himself. Ps. 80 : 16. "The Son of man, whom thou hast made strong for thyself." "The King Messiah, whom thou hast

strengthened for thyself," saith the Targum. The Father also promised,

§ 4. 3. To raise him from the dead. Hence David, in the name of the Messiah, said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," or much rather, "Thou wilt not leave my body in the grave," "nor," or much rather, "for thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Ps. 16: 10. An express promise to this purpose we have in Isa. 53, that he should be taken from prison and from judgment, and should prolong his days. By this the Messiah was to receive a public testimony of his filiation, of his commission, of the perfection and acceptance of his work, and the first fruits of the reward of the travail of his soul.

§ 5. 4. The Father also promised to exalt him at his right hand, as King of Zion. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Ps. 2: 6. Again saith the prophet, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isa. 9: 7. As the Messiah was to endure the cross, so he was also to enjoy a crown. The enduring of the cross was an article on his part; the bestowing a crown was an article on the Father's part. All the prophets foretold "the sufferings of the Messiah, and the glory that should follow." 1 Pet. 1: 11. His subjects, which are called his seed, were to be numerous, like the dew that falls at the dawn of the morning in abundance upon the flowers and the plants of the earth. Ps. 110: 3. Micah, 5: 7. The Father engaged "to bring his seed from the east, and gather them from the west; he would say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." Isa. 43: 5, 6. It is the Father's engagement to make his people willing, Ps. 110: 3. "Thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not

thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God; for he hath glorified thee." Isa. 55 : 5. Finally, the Father promised him,

§ 6. 5. To be the judge of all. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." Isa. 45 : 23. Animated by such assurances of assistance, acceptance, and reward, the Messiah is represented as expressing his cordial approbation and unshaken confidence. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the-smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me: who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." Isa. 50 : 4-9.

§ 7. We now proceed to notice the promissory part of the covenant, as it relates to them for whom the Messiah undertook. Had the first Adam fulfilled the condition of the covenant of works, the life promised in it would have been imparted to his posterity, as well as himself. The second Adam, in like manner, by performing the conditional part of the better covenant, has not only obtained an endless, glorious, mediatorial life for himself, but eternal life for all whom he represented in it. "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began." Tit. 1. 2. "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even

eternal life." 1 John, 2: 25. This life, purchased by the surety of the covenant, is deposited in him, to be by him communicated to the persons for whom he obtained it; and he faithfully and liberally dispenses it to them accordingly: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Col. 1: 19. Hence, when the rich saving communications and supplies with which the church is furnished, to intimate the plenty and the perpetuity of them, are represented by the expressive image of an *overflowing* and *ever-flowing* river, it is said to proceed *originally* from the throne of God, and to run immediately from the throne of the Lamb; that from it, as a great reservoir, the church may be plentifully supplied, according as the exigencies do require. Rev. 22: 1. Thus the Mediator ever is the medium of gracious communication between God and men. The promises of this covenant are manifold and various, as well as great and precious. An interest in God, a saving relation and conformity to him, the favor and fruition of him, constitute the felicity and the dignity which the surety has purchased for his spiritual seed, and which, communicated to them through the channel of the promissory part of the covenant, they possess for ever and ever.

§ 8. The pious Mr. Boston, in his treatise on the covenant of grace, having divided these promised blessings into three classes, viz. those before their union with Christ, those from their union with Christ until death, and those from death through eternity, he has the following observations: "Of the operation of the promises in the first and last of these periods we know but little; and indeed not much of it in the middle period. For it is like a river issuing from a hidden spring, and running far under ground, then rising above ground, and running on till it falls into the ocean. The hidden spring from whence the promise of eternal life to the elect issueth forth, is God's free grace, 'which was given us in Christ before the world began.' 2 Tim. 1: 9. It runs under ground, undiscernible even to the parties them-

selves, until the moment of their union with Christ in effectual calling; then rising, it runs on, as it were, above ground, in visible streams, until death; and then it runs full and perspicuous through the ages of eternity."

§ 9. This covenant is well ordered. Every thing necessary during life, at death, and through eternity, is comprehended in it. Before conversion, the elect sinner is already the object of God's peculiar care. Like the apostle, "they are separated from their mother's womb." To whatever length in sin the wretch may be permitted to go, like the prodigal son, yet, like him, he shall be brought back to his father's house with weeping, lamentation, and self-abhorrence. "When I passed by thee," saith Jehovah, "and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live." Ezek. 16: 6. Once and again does he say unto the sinner, *live*. It has been supposed that the former refers to the preservation of the natural life during the unconverted state; the latter to the infusion of spiritual life at the happy period appointed for the sinner's conversion.

§ 10. Hence we observe that there are many promises relating to their conversion and adoption.

By conversion, I mean their spiritual birth, which is like the new-born babe, born instantaneously, but grows up from infancy to childhood, and the full stature of a man. It includes the whole work of sanctification; a daily dying unto sin, and daily growing in newness of life. Let the following promises speak for themselves, and may you and I, my dear Benjamin, richly experience their happy influence. Isaiah, 26: 19, "Thy dead men shall live." 44: 3, 4, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." Again, Ezek. 11: 19, 20, "And I will give them one heart, and I

will put a new spirit within you ; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them ; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." These promises are repeated with some little alterations by the same prophet, chap. 36 : 25-28 ; and 37 : 11-14, 21-28. But I will not conceal from you, my dear Benjamin, that whilst I believe the *spirit and essence* of these promises belong to every elect sinner, yet I am confident that in the literal, primary and fullest sense, they belong to both the houses of Judah and Israel, and will be faithfully accomplished in a future day, as I shall show, God willing, hereafter.

§ 11. Justification is another promised blessing. This is a precious blessing to the guilty sinner, and much spoken of by the prophets. Daniel speaks of the everlasting righteousness to be brought in by the Messiah, chap. 9 : 25. Isaiah tells us that Jehovah has accepted it ; and that, on account thereof, many shall be justified ; chap. 42 : 21, " The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake." Again, chap. 45 : 24, 25, " Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength."—" In the Lord shall all the children of Israel be justified, and shall glory." And chap. 53 : 11, " By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities." Hence the Messiah is emphatically called " Jehovah our Righteousness," Jer. 23 : 6 ; 33 : 16.

§ 12. The perseverance of the elect is another precious promise in this covenant. Those that are once brought into a state of grace, shall never fall away from it totally and finally. For thus saith Jehovah : " I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. 32 : 40. Here they are secured on both sides ; God will never cast them off, and they shall never desert him. Hence Job de-

clared "that the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." Job, 17 : 9. It is true, the best of God's children, whilst in this world, are liable to be overtaken by sin, and for it they will meet with fatherly correction; yet they shall not be cast off. For thus it is written: "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." Ps, 89 : 30-33.

§ 13. Another precious part of the promises of this covenant belongs to the hour of death. At this most solemn period, when the king of terror presents his commission, when the dark grave opens her mouth; when all the channels of worldly comforts are dried up, and our nearest friends groan, and sigh, and weep, the believer says, "Weep not for me; for though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Jehovah my Shepherd is with me, his rod and his staff they comfort me." Ps. 23. With a smiling countenance, and eyes fixed on heaven, he exclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Ps. 73 : 25, 26. Having often meditated on the promise, "He shall swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces," Isaiah, 25 : 8; he is now enabled, by faith, to exclaim triumphantly, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15 : 55-57.

§ 14. We notice, further, that the promises of this covenant extend to the happiness, in a future world, to be enjoyed through the countless ages of eternity. Of this happiness we can indeed say but little, "as it is written, eye hath not

seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. 2.:9. Thus much, however, we are taught to believe, that no sooner is the believing soul freed from its body, than it is immediately freed from sin and pollution, from pain and sorrow, and it is immediately taken up to heaven, to join with all the redeemed who are before the throne of God and the Lamb, saying: "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Hence the saints often groan, being burdened, desirous to depart and to be with their God and Savior, "in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore." Ps. 16:11. But this part of heaven's felicity will be greatly increased, when their dead bodies shall be raised, and being changed like the glorious body of Jesus, shall be reunited with the soul, and thus be for ever with the Lord. Then shall they shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many unto righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. This is the highest pinnacle of the saints' hopes, when in their whole man they shall enjoy the whole of eternal life in its perfection.

§ 15. In addition to the spiritual happiness of the present and future life, we might also notice the suitable temporal blessings promised in this covenant. "It is ordered in all things." When Adam, by the violation of the covenant of works, forfeited life, he, of course, forfeited the comforts of life. The sinner, therefore, before his conversion, is in a situation similar to a malefactor condemned to die. Though, during the delay of the execution of his sentence, he has a certain allowance of the necessities of this life, he has no *legal* title either to life or to the enjoyments of it. So the sinner, before conversion, has neither a *federal* title to life, nor to any of its enjoyments; but as soon as he is interested,

by faith, in this covenant, recovers what he forfeited by the violation of the covenant of works. He has many promises both of provision and protection. "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure." Isa. 33: 16. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Ps. 34: 10. "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Ps. 84: 11.

§ 16. Thus, my dear Benjamin, I have endeavored to state, in a manner as brief as possible, the different parts of the covenant between the Father and the Son. It will, probably, strike your mind that I did not notice a penalty annexed to this covenant, as is the case with other covenants. This was no omission. There was no penalty annexed to the condition, for there was no necessity of it. A penalty in a covenant supposes the possibility of failure, but, in this covenant, both the parties contracting were *infallible*, and therefore the supposition of a penalty in it must be preposterous and absurd.

§ 17. It is still more probable that you will ask, for whom did the Mediator enter into this covenant? did he, like the first Adam, enter into covenant for all mankind, or only for a part? The answer in the Assembly's Catechism to the question, "Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?" is as Scriptural as it is plain and decisive; the words are these: "God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation, by a Redeemer." Election bespeaks the choice and separation of a part from the whole. The Scriptures are numerous which prove a personal election, from eternity, to everlasting life. Let the following suffice: John, 6: 37. 17: 2, 24. Rom. 8: 29, 33. Eph. 1: 4, 5, 11. 2 Thess.

2 : 13. 2 Tim. 1 : 9. 1 Pet. 1 : 2. Rev. 13 : 8. It is the observation of an eminent divine, "As a wise master-builder makes a plan of his work before it is executed, so God formed a plan in his own mind. He had all possible worlds in view, and knew what would come to pass on every possible scheme. He saw what would take place if the world be formed as it now is. He saw what man would do, and what was fit for himself to do; to whom it would be proper for him to give grace, and to whom to deny it. Viewing the whole, he pronounced his *fiat*, or complete plan, and said, thus let it be." As it is an imperfection to act without a reason, we may be sure God had a reason why he should choose *some* and *such* of the human race, and leave others; and this reason must be consistent with his holiness, wisdom, righteousness, and goodness. It is equally certain that the reason or cause of election is not to be found in man. For what moral goodness could he foresee in fallen and corrupted man before his conversion? Surely none; for what the apostle said of himself is true of all: "In me, i. e. in my flesh, dwelleth *no good thing*." Nor can faith and holiness, after conversion, be the moving cause of his electing man to everlasting happiness; for their very faith and holiness are wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and are the effects and fruits of election rather than the cause. It becomes us, therefore, to adopt the language of our Savior, saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; *for so it seemed good in thy sight*." Matt. 11 : 25, 26.

I will close this particular, and with it this letter, by observing, that as the apostle, in Rom. 5th, reasoned that *all men* have sinned in Adam, because we see that all men die; so I would reason on the present subject. We have seen, from the Scriptural statement in this letter, that the Father promised to his Son a *seed*, i. e. sinners, who shall be regenerated, adopted, justified, and finally and certainly saved; but

we see multitudes die without being regenerated or adopted, who, of course, cannot be saved; therefore they could not have been chosen unto salvation, nor redeemed by the Mediator, nor promised to the Savior.

In my next letter I will, by divine permission, show that the Mediator, or Messiah, was revealed to our first parents in paradise. May it be our happy lot, my dear Benjamin, to be numbered with his chosen when he shall make up his jewels. Amen.

Letter III.

MESSIAH REVEALED IN PARADISE

Dear Benjamin,

§ 1. Having proved the appointment of a Mediator, or Messiah, I will now call your attention to the first revelation made of him. But before I refer you to the prediction itself, I think it important to refute a fatal sentiment which is rather increasing amongst our dear people. With great grief and sorrow of heart I have deeply lamented the infidelity of many of our Jewish brethren, who do not hesitate to call in question the promise made of a Messiah to our fathers. The author of the scheme of literal prophecy suggested "that the belief of a Messiah was a novel conceit among the Jews, invented not long before the age of Jesus." A Mr. Bennett, of London, in a pamphlet addressed to Lord Crawford, &c. advanced the same sentiment. But I trust it will be made evident, from many passages of Scripture which will be referred to hereafter, as well as from those already quoted, all of which have been understood of the Mes

siah by our ancient Rabbins, that a Messiah has been promised.

§ 2. Besides, the expectation of a Messiah supposes that God had promised one. No sooner had the Messiah been revealed to our first parents than they greatly longed to see him, and rejoiced at the birth of their first born son, in the hope that he was the promised Savior, as shall be shown hereafter. It is beyond doubt that he was the object of faith, hope, and desire of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord Jesus Christ said to the Jews in his time, that Abraham rejoiced to see his day; and he saw it, and was glad; or as the Syriac and Arabic versions rightly render the word, "He was *desirous* to see my day." John, 8:56. Jacob, with his dying breath, said, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Gen. 49:18. Perhaps you may be able to call to recollection, my dear Benjamin, the memorable words of the Targum on this passage; they are as follows: "I have waited for thy salvation, said our father Jacob; not for the salvation of Gideon, the son of Joash, which is a temporal salvation, nor for the salvation of Samson, the son of Manoah, which is a transitory salvation, but for the salvation of the Messiah, the son of David, (which is an everlasting one,) who shall bring the children of Israel to himself, and his salvation my soul desires." You doubtless remember that part of the prayer of Simchath Torah, i. e. the last, the great day of the feast of tabernacles, where it is said, "Abraham rejoiced with the rejoicing of the law; he that cometh shall come, the branch, with the joy of the law. Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, rejoiced with the joy of the law, he that cometh shall come, the branch with the joy of the law." Job, that famous man in the east, who was not of the posterity of Abraham, yet professed his faith in the Messiah in that well known and memorable exclamation of his, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms de-

stroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Job, 19 : 25-27. I am aware, my dear Benjamin, of the great controversy, both respecting this passage and the whole history of Job; but I trust that in a future letter I shall make it evident that the book of Job is *no fiction*, and that this passage contains two of Job's articles of faith, viz. his faith in the Messiah, and in the resurrection of the dead. That Moses had a knowledge of the promises concerning a Messiah, is evident from his having recorded them as given to our first parents in Paradise, renewed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as will be shown hereafter; and that he understood and believed them, is evident from the effects which his faith in the Messiah had upon his life and conduct, as described by one of our own brethren, well acquainted with the sentiment of our people respecting the history of Moses, and guided by the pen of inspiration. His words are—"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Heb. 11 : 24-26. We are further assured by an infallible witness, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which his disciples saw, and have not seen them. Matt. 13 : 16, 17. The royal Psalmist exclaimed, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!" Ps. 14 : 7; and the prophet Isaiah, speaking of the days of the Messiah, saith, "It shall be said in that day, lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isa. 25 : 9. This and the preceding verses are applied to the Messiah by our Rabbins. See Tal. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 94, 2, Mish. Moed Katon, c. 3, § 9. Midrash

Cohemoth, fol. 61, 2. Zoh. Gen. fol. 73, 1. Shemoth Rab. § 20, fol. 131, 4.

§ 3. At the time of the coming of Christ there was a general expectation; among our nation it was universal. Pious Simeon and Hannah, and many other devout persons, waited for the consolation of Israel. The Pharisees sent priests and Levites to ask John the Baptist whether he was the Christ. The common people exclaimed, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Hence they were ready to receive any one who pretended to be the Messiah. And it is worthy of observation that many false Christs came after Jesus, but none before. The Samaritans, likewise, had the knowledge of a Savior, and expected his coming, as is evident from the conversation of the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well. John, 4.

§ 4. But it is still more remarkable, the Romans themselves had the same expectations; and not only they, but all the eastern part of the world, which may well include all that was then known. Thus says Suetonius, (Vit. Vesp. 4,) "that an ancient and constant tradition had obtained throughout all the East, that in the fates it was decreed, that, about that time, some who should come from Judea, should obtain the dominion, or government, i. e. of the world, which the Romans then possessed." And Cornelius Tacitus (Hist. L. 5. c. 13,) speaks almost in the same words; telling of the great prodigies which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, he says "that many understood them as the forerunners of that extraordinary person who, the ancient books of the priests did foretell should come about that time from Judea, and obtain the dominion." Virgil, in his famous 4th Eclogue, written about the beginning of the reign of Herod the Great, compliments the consul Pollio with this prophecy, by supposing it might refer to his son Saloninus, then born; but the words are too great to be verified of any mere mortal man: and he speaks of such a golden age, and such a renovation of all things, as cannot be fulfilled in the reign of any earthly king.

And Virgil expresses it almost in the words of the Holy Scriptures, (Isa. 65 : 17,) wherein they tell of the glorious age of the Messiah ; of new heavens and a new earth, then to begin, and to be finally completed at the end of the world.

The last age decreed by fate is come,
And a new frame of all things does begin ;
An holy Progeny from heaven descends,
Auspicious be his birth, which puts an end
To th' iron age, and from whence shall rise
A golden state far glorious through the earth.

Thus the Poet depicts in glowing colors, and makes a perfect paraphrase of Isa. 65, from verse 17 to 25. The prophet says, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw as the bullock ; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy, in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." The poet—

—"Nor shall the flocks fierce lions fear ;
"No serpent shall be there, or herb of pois'nous juice."

Nay, the very atonement for our sins, which Daniel attributed to the Messiah, chap. 9 : 24, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, is thus expressed in this Eclogue—

By thee, what footsteps of our sins remain
Are blotted out, and the whole world set free
From her perpetual bondage and her fear.

And the very words of Haggai, 2 : 6, seem to be literally translated by Virgil. Thus saith the prophet of the coming of the Messiah ; "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come." And thus the poet—

Enter on thy high honor, now's the time,
Offspring of God, O thou great gift of Jove !
Behold, the world, heaven, earth and seas do **shake** ;
Behold how all rejoice to greet that glorious age.

And as if Virgil had been learned in the doctrine of Christ, he tells that these glorious times should not begin immediately upon the birth of that wonderful person, then expected to come into the world ; but that wickedness should still keep its ground in several places.

Yet some remains shall still be left
Of ancient fraud, and war shall still go on.

Now, how Virgil applied all this, is not the question, whether in part to Augustus, or partly to Pollio, and partly to Saloninus his son, then newly born ; but it shows the *general expectation* that there was, at that time, of the birth of a very extraordinary person, who should introduce a new and golden age, and both reform and govern the whole world ; justly, therefore, called by the prophet, “ the Desire of all nations.”

§ 5. But, my dear brother, I need not enlarge on this subject, for it is a happy circumstance that one of the fundamental articles of the faith of our nation supposes the promise of a Messiah. For you know that the 12th article reads thus ; “ I believe, with a firm and perfect faith, that the Messiah is to come ; and although he tarrieth, I will wait or expect his coming daily.” *Maimonides*, on the *Mishnah* of *Sanhedrim*, chapter *Pelek*, calls the belief in a Messiah, a fundamental article. The substance of his words is as follows ; “ The twelfth article is the Messiah, i. e. to wait and believe that he is to come, &c. according as *all* the prophets did prophecy, from Moses even to Malachi ; and whosoever doubts it, or mistrusts his excellency, it is as much as if he denied the law, and he hath no share in the future world.” Hence the coming of the Messiah is mentioned in the daily *public* prayers ; “ Make the offspring of David thy servant speedily to grow, and let his horn be exalted in thy salvation ; for we hope in thy salvation all the day.” Again, “ He will send, at the end of the days, our Messiah, to redeem those who hope for the end of his salvation.” And at the close of the blessing after

every meal, they pray, "Merciful God, make us worthy of seeing the days of Messiah."

§ 6. Thus you see, my dear Benjamin, that a Messiah must have been promised; and I shall make it abundantly evident, in my future letters, that God spake to our fathers of old, at sundry times, and in divers manners, by the prophets, concerning him that was to come into the world. We will now consider the *first revelation* made of him to our parents in paradise—"He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. 3: 15. In the beginning of this chapter Moses, the inspired historian, gives us, first, an account of the temptation wherewith Satan assaulted our first parents to draw them to sin, and their compliance; and secondly, he presents to our view the criminals arraigned before the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, and the sentences pronounced on each of them. The consequences of the fall, on our first parents, we have already considered. Our text is a part of the sentence pronounced on the tempter; in which we have, first, a proclamation of war between the Messiah and Satan; the God of the universe, and the god of this world; and secondly, a prediction of a decided and triumphant victory by the former. We consider, first, the parties engaged; and secondly, the effects produced.

§ 7. We begin with the tempter. That the sentence pronounced in this verse against the serpent, the tempter, relates to Satan, is a general opinion. To suppose that the words are to be literally understood as describing only the rooted and constant enmity which should subsist between the serpent race and the posterity of Adam, or any particular destruction which should await the brood of serpents, would be altogether absurd, unworthy the wisdom of the judge, and unsuitable to the solemnity of such a proceeding. The curse was directed immediately against Satan, the infernal spirit, our great adversary, the devil. He is that serpent which "beguiled Eve through his subtilty; the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil, and

Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." 2 Cor. 11 : 3. Rev. 12 : 9. It is also the unanimous confession of our ancient Rabbins, that Satan was the tempter, and that the curse was pronounced against him. I bring to your recollection a few of their sayings, and refer you to others. R. Bechai, the elder, in his Comment on the Law, on this passage says, "We have no more enmity with the serpent than with other creeping things. Wherefore the Scripture mystically signifies him who was hid in the serpent; for the body of the crafty serpent was a fit instrument for that force or virtue that joined itself therewithal. That was it which made Eve to sin, whence death came on all her posterity. And this is the enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman. And this is the mystery of the holy tongue, that the serpent is sometimes called Saraph, according to the name of an angel, who is also called Saraph. And now thou knowest that the serpent is Satan, and the Evil Figment, and the Angel of Death." Rab. Judah, in Kelay Yaker, saith, "Many interpreters say that the Evil Figment has all its force from the Old Serpent, or Satan." To the same purpose is the author of Caphtor Wapherech. "The devil and the serpent," saith he, "are called by one name." See Maimon. More Nevuchim, p. 2, ch. 20. Ber. Rab. Sect. 10. Mid. Wayikra, chap. 13, v. 2. R. Saadia Gaon, and R. Samuel ben Hophni, and Aben Ezra in Gen. 3, 3. R. Bechai ibi, Targum Jon. Gen. 3, 6. Zohar Gen. fol. 127, 1. 2. Sepher Bachir and Jmre Binah. ibi. Hence they give various names to this tempter. He is called Samal, i. e. the God that has blinded. Comp. 2 Cor. 4 : 3, 4. Malach Ham-maweth, i. e. the Angel of Death. Comp. Heb. 2 : 14, 15. and nothing is more common with our Rabbins than to call him Nachash Hackadmoni; i. e. the Old Serpent. Comp. Rev. 12 : 9. 20 : 2. In Zeror Hammor, fol. 143, c. 2, it is said, "He that hateth," (i. e. prov. 25, 21.) "means Samal, who is the Serpent, who is Satan, who is the Evil Figment or desire, who has led astray or deceived the first

man; and does lead astray, or deceive, all creatures, by his smooth words, which are smoother than oil; and draws men after him in their works and pleasures."

§ 8. We next notice the destruction of the tempter, foretold in this passage. His head is to be bruised. The expression plainly alludes to the way of destroying serpents by striking at their head; and is designed to signify the conquest and victory of the Messiah over the devil, and the destruction of his kingdom; a victory the most illustrious in its effects and consequences, and one which should amply revenge on the serpent's head the evils and miseries which he had introduced into the world. The remarkable and complete fulfillment of this prediction by Jesus Christ, will be made abundantly evident hereafter.

§ 9. We proceed to show that this victory is to be obtained by the Messiah. That the Messiah is the person spoken of, will appear, if we consider, 1. The remarkable description given of him. Instead of "*it* shall bruise," it ought to be, "*He* shall bruise." The original word *Hoo*, is one of the names of God, a contraction for the word Jehovah, and so used in Ps. 102 : 27, "but thou art the same," original, "*weathta Hoo*," i. e. thou art Jehovah, the unchangeable; and again, in Isa. 48 : 12. *Ani Hoo*, "I am Jehovah." Our people frequently use *Hoo* for the name of God. See Seeder Tephilloth, fol. 2, 1. 4, 1. Edition Basil, and in Zohar it is applied to the eternal and blessed God bruising the serpent's head, as expressed in this text. See Broughton's works, page 231, 465, 490, 507. And I still remember the prayer on Hoshani Rabb. where it is repeatedly said, *Ani wehoo hoshianoo*, i. e. the first and the last will save us. Hence the seventy have retained the personal pronoun *autos*, which cannot, grammatically, refer to *sperma*, seed, but to the person meant under that character. The apostle's mode of reasoning, respecting the seed of Abraham, may well be adopted on this occasion. Having quoted the promise, that in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth

should be blessed, lest any should apply it to the natural seed of Abraham, he reasons thus: "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. 3: 8, 16. In like manner, in this passage, it is not said, thy *seeds*, as of many; but *Hoo, he*, as one, which is the Messiah.

§ 10. 2. This person is emphatically called "the seed of the woman;" to intimate to our first parents, that whereas all mankind were to be the seed or offspring of *Adam* as well as of *Eve*, this person is to be of the seed of the woman only. Here is an intimation of the incarnation of the Son of God, and as the apostle calls it, "the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh." A mystery which was more plainly foretold by the Prophet Isa. 7: 14. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." And the prophet Jeremiah saith, "The Lord hath created a *new thing* in the earth—a woman shall compass a man," Jer. 31: 22; which predictions, and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, will be more fully considered in future letters. Memorable are the words of our greatest and most judicious Rabbi, Maimonides. Reflecting on this passage, he says, "This is one of the passages in Scripture which is most wonderful, and not to be understood according to the letter, but contains great wisdom in it." More Nevechim, p. 2, ch. 30.

§ 11. 3. From the work to be performed, it is evident that none but the Messiah could be the person spoken of in this passage. In order to bruise the head of the old serpent, or "to destroy the works of the devil," the manifestation of the Son of God was absolutely necessary. You well remember, my dear Benjamin, what has already been stated in former letters about the necessity of a Mediator. Man having become a guilty, condemned, and depraved creature, could no more change his nature or condition, than "the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots." If our first parents, in their state of integrity,

were found too frail and feeble to withstand the serpent's subtilty, it could scarce be in the power of their descendants, in this fallen state, to conquer and subdue him by their own strength or policy, but that work will require one endued with an extraordinary power from on high.

Besides, this work of bruising the head of the serpent, or Satan, is referred to in other parts of the Old Testament, in passages applied to the Messiah by our Rabbins. I will name but two, which *Yarchi* considers as one in sense. Ps. 110 : 6. "He shall wound the heads over many countries." The whole of this psalm is applied to the Messiah, as I have shown already. The word *Rosh* is singular, and not plural, and frequently signifies a *chief*, captain, ruler, or governor. Hence the words may justly be translated, "He shall wound the head," i. e. him that is the head or ruler "over a large country," which is no other than Satan, the god and prince of this world. The other passage is Hab. 3 : 13. "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation for thine anointed; thou woundest the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the meek." R. Kimchi applies this to the Messiah, and his comment may be thus paraphrased; "As thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, when they entered into the land of Canaan; so wilt thou go forth for the salvation of thy people, by the hands of the Messiah, the Son of David, who shall wound Satan, who is the head, the king and prince of the house of the wicked, and shall raze up all his strength, power, policy, and dominion." All this, my dear Benjamin, and much more, has been accomplished by my blessed Jesus, as I shall show you hereafter.

§ 12. 4. Our ancient Rabbins, as with one voice, have declared that by the seed of the woman, who was to bruise the head of the serpent, is meant the Messiah. You know, as well as I, their common saying, "that before the serpent had wounded our first parents, God had prepared a

plaster for their healing ; and that as soon as sin had made its entrance into our world, the Messiah had made his appearance." Hence both the Targums, that of Onkelos, and that of Jonathan, say, "that the voice which our first parents heard walking in the garden, was the *Memra Jehovah*, i. e. the word of the Lord, or the Messiah, who is always meant by this expression ; (as shall be shown hereafter ;) and the Jerusalem *Targum* commences the verse thus : " And the word of the Lord God called unto Adam." The reason assigned by our Rabbins for calling the Messiah *Memra Jehovah*, is, because that, after man had sinned, God refused to have any further personal or immediate intercourse with him, but made known his mind and will by the Messiah, as we do by our words, either spoken or written. Hence, says the author of *Zeror Hammor*, in *Bereshith*, "before they sinned, they saw the glory of the blessed God speaking with them ; but, after their sin, they only heard his voice walking." In the *Targum* of *Jonathan*, and that of Jerusalem, it is said, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, and they shall obtain healing, or a plaster for the heel, (the hurt received by the Serpent,) in the days of Messiah the King."

§ 13. 5. I would next observe, that if the Messiah is not revealed or promised in this passage, then have we no account of him until the days of our father Abraham, a period of more than 1500 years. But that the saints before that period did believe in the Messiah, is beyond doubt. For we are assured by the inspired apostle, in his epistle to our people, the Hebrews, chap. 11. that Abel offered up his sacrifice by faith in the Messiah, (as shall be made evident hereafter,) and also that "by faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him ; for, before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God." But "how can two walk together, except they be agreed ?" And there is no reconciliation with God, but through the Mediator, (as has

already been proved.) And as Enoch is said to have pleased God, he must have had faith in the Messiah; "For without faith," says the same apostle, "it is impossible to please God." But faith in the Messiah comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It is therefore evident that both Abel and Enoch had the knowledge of a Messiah revealed or promised.

Permit me, my dear Benjamin, to detain you a few moments longer on this important subject, by observing, in the next place,

§ 14. 6. That we have reason to conclude that our first parents believed in the coming of the Messiah. *Adam* seems to have expressed his faith in the Messiah, the seed of the woman, by calling his wife by a new name, viz. *Eve*, or rather *Chavwah*, from the root *Chayah*, to live; saying, "because she was the mother of all living," i. e. appointed to be the mother of *him* who is the cause of *spiritual* life; or the mother of all believers, as Abraham was called the father, and Sarah the mother of the faithful. See Rom. 4: 11, 16. Gal. 4: 22, 28, 31. 1 Pet. 3: 6.

The faith of *Eve* in a Messiah is expressed in a still more remarkable manner. Her first born son she called *Kain*, from the root *Kanah*, to obtain, possess; saying, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," or literally, "I have gotten a man, Jehovah," doubtless expecting that she had given birth to the promised Messiah, that was to bruise the head of the serpent. Memorable are the words of *Jonathan ben Uziel* on this passage. "And Adam," says he, "knew his wife, which desired the angel, and she conceived and bare Kain, and said, 'I have obtained the Man, the Angel of the Lord.' I need not inform you, my dear Benjamin, that by the *Angel of the Lord*, our Rabbins understand the Messiah. Hence, (as I have stated in my narrative, chap. 2,) when parting with our dear father, he laid his hand upon my head, and said, 'the Angel of the Covenant be with thee.' Great has been the controversy on this pas-

sage, but nothing has appeared to me more judicious and pious than the statement made by the Rev. Pye Smith, D. D. and believing that my dear Benjamin will be much pleased with reading it, I will transcribe it in my next letter.

Farewell

Letter IV.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. Agreeably to my promise, I now transcribe the sentiment of Dr. Pye Smith on the reason assigned by our mother Eve for calling her first born son *Kain*, viz. "I have obtained a man, Jehovah." "From the special record of this exclamation of Eve on the birth of her first son, and from the very marked importance which is given to it, it may reasonably be considered as the expression of her eager and pious, though mistaken expectation that the promise, (ch. 3 : 15,) which could not but have created the strongest feeling of interest and hope, was now beginning to be accomplished. The primary, proper, and usual force of the particle *Eth*, placed here before the word Jehovah, is to designate an object in the most demonstrative and emphatical manner. In this use it occurs immediately before and after this clause, and forty times in the first four chapters of these primeval records, not including the instance before us, nor those in which it has a pronominal suffix; it is also prefixed to every proper name in the governed case throughout the fifth chapter. This prodigious number of instances, all

occurring in the same connexion, in the same strain of topic and discourse, in the same most venerable document, is surely sufficient to determine a grammatical question.* It is true, that, in subsequent periods of the language, this particle came to be used as a preposition, to denote *with*, or *by the instrumentality of*; but this was but a secondary idiom, and many of its supposed instances, on a closer consideration, fall into the ordinary construction. There seems, therefore, no option to an interpreter, who is resolved to follow faithfully the fair and strict grammatical signification of the words before him, but to translate the passage as it is given above.

“ Yet the result of this straight and impartial course appears so difficult and harsh, that no surprise can be felt that interpreters have very generally thought it incumbent upon them to devise some mode of eluding it. For this purpose, the established meaning of the language has been more or less violated. But, however true and just is the sentiment contained in each of these interpretations, they all labor under the objection of being invented to escape a difficulty, and consequently of being at variance with the principle of a faithful adherence to the philological sense. If in any emergency we sacrifice that principle, we unsettle the solid rules of interpretation, and destroy the certainty of our conclusions from any written document. Better is it, in any case, to acknowledge the existence of a difficulty, should it even be to our present prowess, insuperable, than thus to break up the foundations on which all just criticism must rest.

“ The mode of rendering adopted by the *Targum* ascribed to *Jonathan*, suggests a strong presumption that the ordi-

* Except the case under consideration, and **ch. 5 : 24**, there is not the shadow of deviation from the usage. But this last is really not an exception, for that verb was used, in both *Kal* and *Hithpaël*, as a transitive, and taking the accusative case of the object. E. g. *Deut. 1 : 19 ; 2 : 7 ; 2 Chron. 9 : 21 ; Job, 22 : 14 ; 29 : 3 ; Prov. 6 : 12 ; Isa. 33 : 15 ; Mica, 2 : 11.*

nary solutions were, by that author, perceived to be incongruous with the true analogy of the language, and that the words given above are unavoidably the fair translation. That rendering is, "I have gotten a man, the angel of Jehovah." This appellation was an established designation of the Messiah.

"The proper question then is, how are we to explain this expression, confessedly so remarkable and difficult? Let us address ourselves to it with serious care and devout humility.

"In all disquisitions upon these most ancient of the scripture records, we should never lose sight of their characteristic brevity and abruptness. They do not form a history, but are rather a succession of memorials. In almost every instance, many things are not mentioned which must necessarily have taken place, and which the mind of the reader is called to supply. In most cases the omitted ideas, or even facts, are so obvious, that the conjectural supplement involves no presumption; in others, the obscurity is great. The case before us, however, is one which can admit of no doubt as to many circumstances; and, reasoning upon them, I submit the following attempt to meet the difficulty.

1. "Adam and Eve could not but have often reflected and conversed upon their former, and their now altered condition, the cause and consequences of the change, the gracious conduct of their offended God, and *the probable meaning* of the mysterious promise. In this infancy of the human race, extraordinary communications from the Deity may be argued to have taken place, on grounds of physical and moral necessity; and these sacred records declare the fact of such communications. It is then a reasonable and almost inevitable supposition, that the same mercy which had given them a glimmering of hope in the memorable promise, would support that hope, would furnish further nutriment to faith, and would direct to exercises of piety. The great institution of sacrifices, for instance, we have every fair reason, short of direct information, to believe now originated. To say the

least that a reasonable probability will allow, our first parents must have had their minds directed habitually, and with strong feelings of interest, towards the promised seed, which was to triumph over the destroyer of their happiness.

2. "The parturiency of Eve must have been productive of the deepest impressions on their minds. Notwithstanding what they might have observed in animals, the want of science, skill, and preparation; and the severe, perhaps unexpected pains endured, could not but occasion great distress and alarm.

3. "Equally great would be the delight, when the pain suddenly ceased, and a new human creature was brought to view. Let any tender mother recollect her own feelings on her first enjoyment of this blessing, and let her then try to imagine what must have been the feelings of *the first* mother, on *the first* occasion of a child being born into the world! The most vivid imagination must probably fall short of conceiving the reality of this most impressive case.

4. "It would seem to have been an idea, not merely probable, but *inevitable*, to Adam and Eve, that the beauteous and lovely creature thus presented to them by the providence of their God, was indeed the destined deliverer. We need not to impute to them the gross conception, that their infant was actually their great Creator and Sovereign; but, putting together *all the circumstances*, I would ask any reflecting person whether an indefinite idea of something connected with the Divine Being, in a way utterly unexampled and unknown, was not likely to arise in the mind of 'the mother of all living;' and whether she might not, from natural feelings of hope and exultation, and especially considering the extreme paucity of words which must then have belonged to language, give utterance to this obscure, yet most precious and joyous idea, in the remarkable manner that is recorded? We cannot but conclude, from the fact of its being thus recorded, and without any observation or elucidating of the exclamation, that by Moses, and the

men of the earliest times before him, it was considered as a most memorable and important declaration; and still more, that to the Spirit of wisdom and truth it appeared worthy of imperishable preservation.

“A reason for the divine conduct in this presents itself at once. The whole connection of the Old Testament contains evidence of the systematic counsel of heavenly grace to maintain and strengthen among men the expectation of the glorious deliverer. The fond exclamation of Eve, bitterly mistaken as she was in its immediate application, was not the less the language of faith in the word of Jehovah. As a monument therefore of her faith, and as a link in the chain of notices and encouragements, it was worthy of being thus recorded.

“The inference from this fact, in reference to our present inquiry, is, that Adam and Eve looked for the deliverer from sin and evil with deep anxiety and sanguine hope; that they believed that he would be a child of man; and that they had an obscure, but yet strong impression, that, in some unknown and mysterious sense, he would be described as ‘the man, Jehovah.’” Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, vol. 1. 235–241.

§ 2. Now, my dear Benjamin, having, at considerable length, proved that it was revealed in this passage, that Messiah was to obtain a complete and triumphant victory over Satan, it remains only to notice the last sentence, viz. that Satan should bruise the *heel* of the Messiah. This expression doubtless relates primarily and chiefly to the sufferings and death of the Messiah, to be brought about by the instigation of Satan, (as shall be shown more fully hereafter.) Hence we read that it was Satan who put it into the heart of Judas to betray him, Peter to deny him, the chief priests to prosecute him, the false witnesses to accuse him, and Pilate to condemn him.

§ 3. From what has been related, I hope, my dear brother Benjamin, you will be convinced that the curse pro-

nounced on Satan, the tempter, in the 15th verse, contained a gracious revelation of the Messiah, and his mediatorial work, to destroy the works of the devil; and although I did not call it a *promise* made to our first parents, as divines generally do, yet it being pronounced in their presence and hearing, they did understand and believe it as such, as I have already shown above. Indeed, it may well be said of this short sentence, that it contained "*multum in parvo*," much in little. Like as the largest oak, with all its numerous and wide-spreading branches, is originally contained in the small acorn, so was the whole plan of salvation, however copiously and clearly unfolded in subsequent revelations, comprehended in the passage we have considered. Thus the light of the Sun of Righteousness shed forth his benign beams *first* in paradise, where the natural sun commenced his course; and as the light of the sun shines gradually brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, so was the rising of the Sun of Righteousness; for God was pleased "to speak to our fathers of old, at sundry times, and in divers manners, by the prophets." The second revelation, or direct promise of the Messiah, was made to our father Abraham, which I shall consider in my next letter.

Farewell.

Letter V.

MESSIAH PROMISED TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB.

Beloved Brother,

§ 1. Agreeably to my promise, I will now direct your attention to the second revelation, or promise of a Messiah. It has already been observed that the promises of the Mes-

siah were made gradually clearer and brighter. This will be seen, in some measure, in the manner in which he was promised to our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, recorded in the following passages. To Abraham : Gen. 12 : 1-3, "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; *and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*" Confirmed to him by oath. Gen. 22 : 15-18. "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: *and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;* because thou hast obeyed my voice." The promise repeated to Isaac. Gen. 26 : 2-4. "And the Lord appeared unto Isaac, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land; and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries; and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father: and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries: *and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" The promise renewed to Jacob at Beth-el. Gen. 28 : 13, 14. "And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to

the south; *and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*"

§ 2. You will observe, my dear Benjamin, that in the first of these passages we have an account of the origin and separation of our beloved people, to be a peculiar nation, greatly honored and blessed above all other nations; "for to them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. 9: 4, 5. To prevent the universal prevalence of idolatry, and to reserve a remnant to himself, among whom his true worship might be maintained, to whom his oracles might be delivered, and with whom his ordinances might be established till the coming of the Messiah, the Lord, in his wise, holy, and gracious sovereignty, made choice of our father Abraham, and singled him out from among his associates in idolatry, whilst he suffered other nations to walk in their own ways. In consequence of this choice, "the God of glory appeared to him," and having made himself known unto him, and satisfied him that this was a divine revelation, he commanded him to leave his native country. To engage his prompt obedience, he promised to bless him *personally*, in things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; and *relatively*, in his posterity, "to make of him a great nation," and "to make his name great." And to crown the whole, he promised him the Messiah, saying, "In thee" (i. e. the Messiah, as shall be shown presently) "shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The remarkable fulfillment of this prediction, as far as it relates to Abraham and his natural posterity, is evident from their history; and the following observation of the venerable Dr. Scott is worthy our notice: "Abraham was not renowned either as a conqueror, a lawgiver, or an inventor of useful and ingenious arts; he was neither a monarch, a genius, a philosopher, nor so much as an author

of any sort ; but a plain man, dwelling in tents, and feeding cattle all his days ; yet perhaps no mere man has been so widely and permanently had in honor. The Jews, and many tribes of the Saracens and Arabians, justly own and revere him as their progenitor ; many nations in the east exceedingly honor his memory at this day, and glory in their real or pretended relation to him. Throughout the visible church he has always been held in the highest veneration ; and at present, Jews, Mahomedans, and even many gentiles, amidst all their discords and antipathies, vie with each other, and with Christians, who should most honor this ancient patriarch. It is evident from the history, that nothing could be more improbable at the time than this event ; yet the prediction contained in these few words has been fulfilling most exactly and minutely during the course of almost four thousand years ! Need we any other proof that the historian wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost ?

§ 3. You will please, my brother, to notice, that as a reward for the unparalleled obedience of our father Abraham, the Lord not only renewed the forementioned promises, but confirmed them, in the second passage quoted, by an oath ; but instead of saying, as at first, “*in thee,*” he now said, “*in thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ;” and this mode is continued in the repetition of the promises to Isaac and to Jacob ; and in all the four passages this is the *closing* blessing, that which includes and exceeds all other blessings. *Without* it, the *possession* of all other things can never make us happy ; and *with* it, the want of all other things cannot make us miserable. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?” Matt. 16 : 26. “For it has pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, Col. 1 : 19 ; and that out of his fullness we might receive, and grace for grace. John, 1 : 16. Oh, then, my dearly beloved brother Benjamin, let us “first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness,

and all other things shall be added thereunto." Matt. 6 : 33. "For he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not *with him* also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8 : 32. Like our venerable father Abraham, let us obey God, and not fear, nor "confer with flesh and blood," for the Lord will be our "shield and our exceeding great reward." Gen. 15 : 1. Pardon this little digression.

§. 4. Let us observe, in the next place, the increasing light of the Sun of Righteousness in the difference between the first revelation of the Messiah made to our parents in paradise, and that made to our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the former it was left undiscovered, and undetermined, out of what people or nation the Messiah was to arise, and only, in general, declared that he should be the *seed of the woman*; but in these it is expressed in plain terms, that he should be of the seed of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; in the former, a simple deliverance from the power of Satan was predicted, in the present, actual blessings are promised. I will now proceed to prove that by the *seed* is meant the Messiah; enumerate the blessings promised; point out the channel in which they are to flow; show the extent of the promise, and its exact accomplishment. We begin with the first:

§ 5. To prove that the Messiah is meant by the *seed* in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. I am perfectly aware, my dear Benjamin, that our *modern* Rabbins have tried to apply it to any person else rather than to the Messiah; and I am sorry to add, that even some Christian writers have adopted their sentiment; but nothing can be more evident than that the prediction is not applicable to any one person, either *individually* or *collectively*, but only to the Messiah; and has been literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ; blessed be his holy name for ever. Surely it is not applicable to our father Abraham. For in what sense can it be said that all nations have been blessed in him? In his

own person he conversed with but few of them, and unto some of them, through their own sins, he was an occasion of punishment; as to the Egyptians, Gen. 12 : 17, and to the Philistines, ch. 20 : 4, 2. Some he destroyed with the sword, ch. 14 : 15; and was not in any thing, signally, a blessing unto any of them. Besides, in the repetition of the promise, ch. 22 : 18, it is expressly limited to his seed; and for the same reason it cannot be applied either to Isaac or to Jacob; for it is in their seed, and not in them, that the prediction was to be accomplished. It is true, that in the promise made to Jacob, it is said, "*in thee* and in thy seed:" but you well know, my dear brother, that not unfrequently the second sentence is used as an interpretation of the former, and the *wav* conjunction is used instead of "that is to say," or "even;" and therefore may be read thus: "in thee," *that is to say*, or *even* "in thy seed." Take the following instances: Gen. 13 : 15. "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." Now we know that Abraham, personally, never inherited any part of the promised land; the meaning of the promise therefore is: "to thee," that is to say, or even "to thy seed." 1 Chron. 21 : 12. "Three days the Lord's *sword* and the pestilence," for that is to say, "the pestilence." Hence, 2 Sam. 24 : 13, we read, "three days pestilence," the word *sword* being omitted. See also Ps. 16 : 10. (This last passage will be particularly examined hereafter.)

§ 6. Neither can the prediction be applied to our nation collectively. There is no sense in which it can be said "that all nations" have been blessed in, or by them. For although they have been the means or instruments of handing the Bible and laws to other nations, yet they have not done it either willingly or designedly; for since they have been constituted a separate nation, there has always existed a mutual enmity between our people and all other nations. I am aware that because the word is used in Hithpael, i. e. "they shall bless themselves," the author of the "Scheme of Literal Prophe-

cy," p. 132, has adopted the opinion of our modern Rabbins, viz: that the nations of the world would take up this as a form of blessing among them, saying. "God bless you as he did the Israelites, or seed of Abraham;" but this opinion is void of every vestige of proof. No one instance can be produced, where the nations of the world ever used such a form of blessing themselves; on the contrary, the name of our dear people has always been used, by all nations, by way of *reproach*, and as a *proverb*, and *taunt*, and a *curse*. Besides, the word *seed* is used in the singular number, in the same sense as it is used in the following passages: "God," said she, "has appointed me another *seed* instead of Abel." Gen. 4: 25. "To me thou hast given no seed." Gen. 15: 3. "Also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy *seed*." Gen. 21: 13. The Targum on Ps. 18: 26, says, understanding the declaration to relate to Abraham, "with his seed, which is Isaac." The seventy translate *Ben*, Son, in Deut. 25: 5, by *Sperma*, seed. That the word has a plural, is evident from the very *name* of the tract in the Talmud, called *Sedarim*, i. e. *seeds*, and is used in the plural number, even as spoken of the posterity of men. Tal. Rab. Sanhed. fol. 37. 1.

§ 6. That by the word seed, is meant the Messiah, will appear, if we consider that this is the peculiar appellation of the Messiah throughout the Old Testament; I believe there is not one instance in which he is called the *son* of the woman, or the *son* of Abraham, or the *son* of Isaac, or the *son* of Jacob, or the *son* of David, though that was a more easy and intelligible phrase for a single person than the other, and though the New Testament so styles him on those occasions. I have already named four places belonging respectively to the *woman*, to *Abraham*, to *Isaac*, and to *Jacob*, whose seed the Messiah was to be. The same word is applied to him when this promise comes to be renewed to David; "when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy *seed*

after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom." 2 Sam. 7 : 12. Or, as it is still more distinctly in the parallel account in 1 Chron. 17 : 11, "It shall come to pass when thy days be expired, that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy *seed* after thee, which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish his kingdom;" and again, in that noble comment on this famous prophecy, Ps. 89 : 3, 4, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant; thy *seed* will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." Again, ver. 29. "His *seed* also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven." Again, ver. 35, 36. "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David: his *seed* shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." In all these places we see that the original promise, Gen. 3 : 15, is still all along referred to.

§ 7. That the seed in whom all nations are to be blessed, is the Messiah, is evident from many other passages of Scripture, where he is predicted as the source of blessings to all nations. "For to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts, 10 : 43. David, speaking of the Messiah, says, "His name shall endure for ever, his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and man shall be blessed in him; and all nations shall call him blessed." Ps. 72 : 17. The apostle Peter also assured our forefathers, "that all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." Acts, 3 : 24, 25.

§ 8. Further, we observe that this prediction is applied to the Messiah, both in the New Testament and by our ancient Rabbins. We have just quoted the words of Peter, who

applies the promise to Jesus the Messiah; and the apostle Paul, who was a perfect Hebrew scholar, and could speak the language fluently, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, one of our chief Rabbins, and had made greater progress in Jewish learning than all his cotemporaries, applies the promise to Jesus the Messiah, reasoning thus; "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to *seeds*, as of many; but as of one, and to thy *seed*, which is Christ." Gal. 3 : 16. It is also applied to the Messiah by our ancient Rabbins. *Sepher chasidim*, § 961, quoted in Allix' Judgment of the Jewish Church, page 57. R. Reuben, in his testament to his sons, charges them to worship the *seed* of Judah, who should die for them, in visible and invisible wars, and should be among them an eternal King. Whiston's note on Josephus' Ant. B. I. ch. 13. § 4. In three passages quoted by Wetstein, from Bereshith Ravba and Ruth Ravba the singular *Sera*, *seed*, put to denote a son, is affirmed to signify "the King Messiah." Wetstein, N. T. Tom. II. in Gal. 3 : 16.

§ 9. Thus, my dear Benjamin, we perceive that Messiah is meant by the seed, in these predictions and promises made to our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I should now be led to consider the blessings to be derived from the Messiah, but having already spoken of this subject in a former letter, and purposing, by divine permission, to show hereafter the fulfillment of these predictions in the Messiah Jesus, I shall, at present, mention only those blessings, in other parts of Scripture, referred to the prediction under consideration. In the Messiah we are indeed blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places; with peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life; with grace here, and glory hereafter. "In Jesus," says one of our German divines, "the greatest of Abraham's descendants, the nations of the earth, and we also, have received the knowledge of truth, pardon of sin, tranquillity of conscience, hope of salvation, peace and joy in God, and the

rich abundance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit." *Seiler's Groe. Bib. Erb.* vol. 1, p. 217.

§ 10. *Justification*, including the pardon of sin, acceptance with God, and eternal life, is particularly mentioned by the apostle, as included in this blessing to the Gentiles, saying, "The Scripture foreseeing that God would *justify* the heathen through faith, preached before, the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Gal. 3: 8. "To him," saith the apostle Peter, "give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whoever believeth in him, shall receive *remission of sins*." The copious and powerful *effusions* of the *Holy Spirit* was another blessing included in this prediction; as we are taught by the apostle of the Gentiles, saying, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. 3: 13, 14. This was also frequently mentioned by the prophets, as what was to be conferred at the accomplishment of the promise. Isa. 44: 3. Joel, 2: 28. comp. Acts, 2: 16-34. And although the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which were bestowed at first for the spread and confirmation of the Gospel, and as evidence that God received and justified uncircumcised Gentiles through faith, as he did Abraham, Acts, 5: 32. 11: 15-19. 15: 8-12, have ceased, yet the regenerating, sanctifying, and comforting influences of the Spirit, are still bestowed on all believers, and are essential to their being so. Rom. 8: 9, 14. Another blessing is *adoption* into God's family, and a title to the heavenly *inheritance*. Hence, saith the same inspired apostle, "when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. 4: 4, 5. By the covenant with Abraham, our venerable

father, his natural seed were typically adopted as a nation. Exod. 4 : 22, 23. Rom. 9 : 4. But the mere children of the flesh, these are not the true children of God, Rom. 9 : 4, and, therefore, when Christ, the promised seed, came to his own nation, it was only to those of them who received him, and believed on his name, that he gave power to become the sons of God, and these are described not as mere children of the flesh, but as born of God. John, 1 : 11-13. The land of Canaan, also, which was promised to Abraham and his seed, for an everlasting possession, was but a type of the eternal inheritance in heaven. And our fathers, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, understood it as such, and confessed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth, plainly declaring that they sought and desired a better country, that is, an heavenly, and looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11 : 13-17. Hence, saith the apostle, the Gentiles which "were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world—are now no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. 2 : 12, 19.

§ 11. We will now proceed to consider the extent, or subjects of these blessings. "All the nations of the earth," i. e. not every individual person, but some in all nations, who, with Abraham, believe in the same promised seed, as the apostle has taught us to explain this prophecy, saying, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before, the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed; so then, they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. 3 : 8, 9. This was the happy dawn of day upon the poor benighted Gentiles. It was the Gospel, or good news to them, that they also should be made partakers of the blessings to be procured by the Messiah; and the same

good news was repeatedly foretold by the Prophets. I will name but a few. "There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the *Gentiles* seek: and his rest shall be glorious." "Behold my servant—in whom my soul delighteth—he shall bring forth judgment to the *Gentiles*. I will give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light of the *Gentiles*." "It is a light thing, that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord—even them will I bring to my holy mountain; and—mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." "The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, besides those that are gathered unto him. The strangers that sojourn among you—shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel." "From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the *Gentiles*; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the *heathen*, saith the Lord of hosts." Isa. 11: 10. 42: 1, 6. Matt. 12: 18. Isa. 49: 6. 56: 6–8. John, 10: 16. Ezek. 47: 22. Mal. 1: 11.

§ 12. How strange, my dear Benjamin, that, after so many and clear predictions, any of our beloved brethren should have conceived the idea of excluding the *Gentiles* from the blessings of the Messiah! for you know the great controversy which was so much agitated in the schools of Hillel and Shammai, viz. whether or no, when the Messiah came, the nations of the world would have any advantage by him? A vast majority were on the negative side of the question, and believed they would be all destroyed at his coming, and have no favor or mercy shown them. Yea, so deeply rooted was this erroneous sentiment, that even the disciples of Jesus,

after their conversion, were offended, both with the apostles Peter and Paul, for preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. Hence we find that this opinion was much opposed by Christ and his apostles. Good old Simeon, when he had taken the holy child Jesus in his arms, said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the *Gentiles*, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke, 2: 29-32. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, ch. 3: 39, 40, asks the following question: "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." And when the Jews were filled with envy at seeing the multitude attending the word preached, "then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts, 13: 45-47.

§ 13. Hence we may learn, my dear Benjamin, the true reason why the blessings of the Gospel are so frequently expressed in the New Testament in universal terms. For the controversy at that time was not, as it has been formerly, amongst Calvinists and Armenians, and is now, amongst Christians of the same denomination, Episcopalians against Episcopalians, Presbyterians against Presbyterians, and Baptists against Baptists, whether all and every individual of the human race has been redeemed by Christ; but the controversy was, whether any of the Gentiles should be redeemed by the Messiah, or not. John the Baptist, therefore, when he saw Jesus coming unto him, points him out, as it were, with the finger, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the sin of the world." John, 1 : 29. Here the word *world* is used for *Gentiles*, as distinct from the *Jews*: their lambs were offered for the Jews only, but Christ was a sacrifice to atone for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. In the same sense, and for the same reason, our blessed Lord used the word *world* in his conversation with one of our masters in Israel, saying, "God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John, 3 : 16. In like manner the apostle John says that Jesus Christ was "the propitiation for our sins," meaning the sins of the Jews, for John himself was a Jew; "and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John, 2 : 2. The expressions *all nations*, *all men*, *the whole world*, &c. are evidently opposed to the limitation of the blessing to Abraham's natural seed, our nation, and extend it to all his spiritual seed of all nations, who are constantly distinguished from worldly nations as such, and described to be all who, like him, believe, be they Jews or Gentiles, Rom. 4 : 11-14; for it is they who be of faith, that are blessed with faithful Abraham, Gal. 3 : 9, and that are heirs according to the promise made to him, ver. 29.

§ 14. I will now proceed, as proposed, to point out the channel in which these blessings shall come upon the nations of the earth, Jews as well as Gentiles. This channel is *faith in the Messiah*. It is indeed but faintly mentioned in this prediction, but plainly and repeatedly taught in the sacred Scriptures. The word *Hithbarchoo*, "shall be blessed," signifies, *shall bless themselves, shall esteem or judge themselves blessed*. "To esteem one's self blessed in any one," says an eminent critic, "is an expression equivalent to this, to hope for all divine blessings through the person referred to, and to believe that God has such an especial love to that person, that he will bless us for his sake, and through our obedience to him. It is of precisely the same meaning as the expression usually employed by the apostle Paul, *to*

believe on him," Michaelis, Uebersetz, U. Ammerk. As there was no other way of saving sinners but by the appointment of a mediator, as has already been stated, so there is no other way for the sinner to obtain the blessings procured by that mediator, but by *faith* in him. I am aware that this important truth was lost sight of, by many of our people, as early as Christ and his apostles. Even at that time, as well as hitherto, our Rabbins taught that the meritorious cause of the salvation of our people is their natural descent from Abraham, and their obedience to the law of Moses. Hence you well know, my dear Benjamin, that nothing is more common, both in the conversation and prayers of our people, than the following maxims: "Col Yisrael chelek leolam havba," i. e. every Israelite has part in the world to come; again, "Teshuvah, Tephillah, uzedakah maavirin eth col roah haggezereth," i. e. repentance, prayer and alms-deeds deliver from every evil decree, or threatening. Now the apostle Paul, who was educated at the feet of Gamaliel, and well acquainted with the sentiments of our Rabbins, and who was also himself by profession a Pharisee, and exceedingly strict in practice, after his conversion he refuted these principles in a most masterly manner, and established the doctrine of salvation by faith in the Messiah.

§ 15. Permit me, my dear brother, most affectionately to recommend to your serious and careful consideration his chain of reasoning contained in the 2d, 3d, and 4th ch. of his Epistle to the Romans; and from which I will quote but two of his arguments. With respect to their trusting to their mere descent from Abraham, he says, "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God." Rom. 2: 28, 29. That the circumcision of the flesh was a type of the circumcision of the heart, is acknowledged by our Rabbins, R. David Kimchi on Jer. 4: 4, saith, "This is the circum-

cision of the heart." Philo, one of our nation, saith, "Circumcision taught the cutting off of all pleasures and affections; it is a symbol of two things particularly; the one is the cutting off of pleasure, and the other is the removal of arrogancy, that grievous disease of the soul;" and in another place he calls purity, or chastity, "the circumcision of circumcision." De Migrat. Abraham. p. 402. De Circumc. p. 811. De Somnis p. 10, 11. Nor do our Rabbins restrict the appellation "Jew" to the natural descendants of Abraham or Judah; for it is said in the Talmud, "that whosoever denies idolatry is called a Jew." T. Rab. Megilloth, fol. 13, 1. Hence, in the same place, "Pharaoh's daughter is called a *Jewess*, because she denied idolatry, and went down to wash herself from the idols of her father's house." And again it is said, "that faith does not depend upon circumcision, but upon the heart; he that believeth not as he should, circumcision does not make him a Jew; and he that believeth as he ought, he indeed is a Jew, though he is not circumcised." Sepher Niz. ad Gen. Apud Maji. Theolog. Jud. p. 252.

§ 16. With respect to their second maxim, "trusting in their own works," he shows, first, that it is contrary to the Scripture; and that our father Abraham himself was not justified by works, but by faith in the promised Messiah. I will give you his own words. "What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Rom. 4: 1-12. It remains only, my dear Benjamin, to show the fulfillment of this prediction, and this we will do, God willing, after we have shown that the Messiah must have come already, and that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. For the present, I bid thee farewell.

The God of Abram praise,
Whose all-sufficient grace
Shall guide me, all my happy days,
In all his ways:
He calls a worm his friend,
He calls himself my God!
And he shall save me to the end,
Through Jesus' blood.

He by himself hath sworn;
I on his oath depend;
I shall, on eagles' wings upborne,
To heaven ascend;
I shall behold his face,
I shall his pow'r adore;
And sing the wonders of his grace
For evermore.

PART III.

MESSIAH MUST HAVE COME LONG SINCE.

Letter I.

JACOB'S PREDICTION FULFILLED.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. Agreeably to promise, I will now endeavor to show that the time predicted for the *first advent* of the Messiah has long since expired. You will observe, I mention his *first* advent, for the Scriptures plainly point out *three* advents of the Messiah. First, in a state of humiliation, to redeem his people; *second*, in a state of glory, to reign a thousand years upon the earth; and *thirdly*, to judge the whole world. A want of proper and careful attention to these different appearances of the Messiah, has first led our nation to reject Jesus of Nazareth, because he did not answer their worldly expectation. For they could not bear the idea of a suffering Messiah, (as has already been stated, and shall be shown more fully hereafter,) and having been convinced since that the prophets spake of a *suffering* Messiah, as well as of a *glorious* one, they have, as you well know, invented an unscriptural notion, viz. that of *two* distinct Messiahs; one of which should be the *Son of Joseph*, a miserable and afflicted man, who, attempting to rescue our people from their captivity, should be slain in war, and his party crushed by their oppressors; and that after him should arise *Messiah, the Son of David*, a flourishing and potent prince. See

Mashmia Yeshua, fol. 53, c. 3. Pseudo Jonath. Exod. 40 : 11. Targum on Cant. 4 : 5. Tal. Bab. Succath, c. 5. fol. 52.

§ 2. That the opinion of *two distinct* Messiahs is a mere *fiction* of our Rabbins, is evident; 1. From the many passages of Scripture where the Messiah is spoken of as *one and the same* person, who was first to suffer and then to enter into his glory. See Gen. 3 : 15. Ps. 22. Ps. 91 : 13–15. Isa. 52 : 13–15. chap. 53. Dan. 9 : 24–27. Zech. 9 : 9 ; 13 : 7. 2dly. From the question put to John the Baptist, and afterward frequently to Jesus Christ himself, by all classes of people, “Art thou the Christ?” “Art thou he that was to come?” Always speaking of one and the same person. We find the expression *the son of David*, repeatedly used by our *ancient* Rabbins, and by the Jews in our Lord’s time, but never the *son of Joseph*. 3dly. From the omission of the whole story of *Messiah ben Joseph* by *Maimonides*, in his relation of the Messiah. See Dr. Pocock’s App. on Mal.

§ 3. To return to our subject—the first advent of the Messiah to be the Savior of sinners. That God had determined and revealed the exact period for this advent, we might reasonably expect; for we know that God revealed the times of various other occurrences, that have been verified at the exact predicted period. He informed Noah how many years should pass from the time he spake to him of the flood until it should come, and at the end of that period the flood came. Gen. 6 : 3. He told Abraham how many years his posterity should be in bondage in Egypt, and at the end of that period he delivered them. Gen. 15 : 13. By the prophet Ezekiel he made known the number of years from the revolt of the ten tribes to the destruction of the first temple, which accordingly came to pass. Ezek. 4 : 5–8; and the period of 70 years of the Babylonish captivity foretold by Jeremiah, was exactly fulfilled.

§ 4. Now is it credible that the Spirit of God, which predicted those several events, should not have foretold what

time the Messiah should come?—Christ, the end and scope of the law and the prophets, the hope of the church, and the joy of the patriarchs?—he to whom the nations were to gather, and of whom they expected an everlasting redemption? Is it credible, I say, that a prefixed time, more necessary than all the former events, should have been omitted? No, my dear brother, God has revealed, at sundry times, and in divers manners, the exact period for the Messiah's advent.

§ 5. Remarkable is the prophecy of Habbakkuk, ch. 2: 2, 3, "The Lord answered me and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." It is the general opinion of our most eminent Rabbins, that this prophecy relates to the coming of the Messiah. R. Abendani, Note in Michlal Yophi in Loco. Tal. Sanhed. f. 97, 2. Maimonides, in Pocock, Port. Mos. p. 176, and Gedalia in Shal. Hakab. in Wagenseil, Lip. Car. Conf. p. 617–625. The expression, "it will surely come," may and ought to be translated, "He that shall come, will come," and is a general description of the Messiah. Hence, when John the Baptist sent to Jesus to inquire whether he be the promised Messiah, the question is expressed thus: "Art thou he that should come?" Matt. 11: 3–5. "At the end it shall speak," saith the prophet, i. e. at the end of the Jewish dispensation, when the civil and religious state was near its dissolution. Hence we are told that the prophets diligently searched into the time of the Messiah's advent. 1 Pet. 1: 11. And the apostle assures us, "that when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. 4: 4, 5. Besides, our Rabbins themselves acknowledge that the time for the Messiah's advent was determined and foretold; but, convinced that the

period is elapsed, and unwilling to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Messiah, although he came at the exact time, they have pronounced a curse upon every one that attempts to compute the end. Now, from the writings of Moses and the prophets, it appears that the Messiah was to come whilst the tribe of Judah was distinctly known by genealogy; during the existence of the second temple, and before the sacrifices ceased.

§ 6. That the Messiah was to appear whilst the tribe of Judah was yet distinctly known by genealogy, is evident from Jacob's prophecy concerning Judah. The patriarch, sensible that the "time of his departure was at hand," "he called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last day;" and having constituted them into twelve distinct tribes, he declared, by the spirit of prophecy, the most remarkable events that should befall each of them, the truth and correctness of which is abundantly confirmed by the pages of history. The prediction concerning Judah is that which I propose to consider. It is thus expressed: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be: binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." Gen. 49: 8-12. The first and the last two verses are expressed in striking images and emblems, to represent the invincible force, the secure dignity and majesty, and the rich abundance to be enjoyed by the posterity of Judah; but the language of the middle verse is plain and simple, announc-

ing the coming of the Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. I shall endeavor to show, that by Shiloh is meant the Messiah, and that the time for his coming is long since past.

§ 9. That by Shiloh is meant the Messiah, will appear, if we consider, *first*, the occasion of this prophecy. We have already seen that, at the close of Jacob's life, he was endowed with the spirit of prophecy to foretell the most remarkable events that should befall his sons in succeeding ages; and it might reasonably be expected that the most remarkable of all events, the coming of the Messiah, could not be omitted. Besides, our Rabbins are agreed that where the expression "the latter days" is used, it refers to the days of the Messiah: see Kimchi, Isa. 2: 2, M. B. Israel de Ress, l. 3, c. 3. But this expression is used here; and if the prediction concerning Judah does not refer to the Messiah, the subject is then altogether omitted. The nature of this prediction is perfectly in unison with the revelation of the Messiah from its commencement. At first the promise of a Messiah was made to Adam, Gen. 3: 15; then to Shem, the son of Noah, when Japhet and Ham were passed by, Gen. 9: 26, 27; afterward it was renewed to our father Abraham, chap. 12: 3; and from him it was transmitted to Isaac, Ishmael being passed by, Gen. 22: 18; from Isaac it was conveyed to Jacob, Esau being passed by; and Jacob, guided by the Holy Spirit, restricts the promise of the Messiah to Judah. *Secondly*, The signification of the word *Shiloh* showeth that it meant the Messiah. It is true, the learned, both amongst Jews and Christians, differ about the signification of this word, yet each agrees well with the Messiah. Kimchi says it signifies "his Son," i. e. Judah's: now, what son can it be but that famous renowned son of his, called *Nagid*, the Prince Messiah, who was to spring from this tribe? Yarchi and Onkelos paraphrase it, "whose it is," i. e. the kingdom, and apply it to the Messiah, of whom it is said, Ezek. 21: 27, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn

it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." This passage is applied to the Messiah. Abendani note in Mich. Yophi, in loco. Others consider it a compound, and signifying, "to whom gifts belong" or "shall be brought." This also agrees well with the Messiah, of whom it is said, Ps. 72: 10, 15, that presents and gifts should be brought to him. Others, again, derive it from the root which signifies to be quiet, peaceable, and prosperous. This also suits the character of the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, whose voice was not to be heard in the streets, who was to make peace between God and men, and in whose hands the pleasure of the Lord was to prosper. *Thirdly*, That the Messiah is intended by Shiloh, is farther evident from the sentence immediately following. Whether it signifieth "to him shall the gathering of the people be," or "to him shall be the expectation" or "obedience of the people," it suits none so well as the Messiah, "in whom all the nations were to be blessed," and of whom Isaiah saith, ch. 11: 10, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." Micah also predicted the same glorious event, ch. 4: 1, "The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it." And by the prophet Haggai, ch. 2: 7, he is emphatically called "the *desire* of all nations." *Fourthly*, We have also the unanimous testimony of the best and most ancient commentators of our nation, that by Shiloh is meant King Messiah. To their testimony I shall frequently appeal; first, because it shows what were the sentiments and opinions of our ancient fathers; and secondly, because the generality of our people give more credit to the sayings of our wise men than to the word of God itself. But to quote their *expressions*, and especially in Hebrew, would take up too much room: I shall therefore give only references. Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan and Jeru-

sulem in loco. Zohar Numb. f. 101, 2. Raya Nechimna Ex. f. 4. Tal. Sanhed. f. 98. c. 2. Ber. Rab. Yarchi, and Baal Hatt. in loco. Kimchi in lib. Shorash Rad. Shil. Niz. Vet. p. 29. Nach. Disp. cum. frat. Paulo, p. 53.

§ 10. Thus, dear Benjamin, I have endeavored to show you that by Shiloh is meant the Messiah. Let us now see at what time he was to appear. It is evident that he was to come before the *sceptre* and *lawgiver* ceased from Judah, or rather during the existence of the tribe of Judah, distinctly known by genealogy. The Hebrew word here translated, *sceptre*, is *shevet*, the radical signification of which is a rod or staff of any kind. Now, although the word is sometimes used figuratively as a *sceptre*, yet that cannot be the meaning in this passage; for (as Bishop Sherlock and others have justly observed) that it could not with any sort of propriety be said that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah*, when Judah had no *sceptre*, nor was to have any for many generations afterward; beside, the royal authority departed from Judah above five hundred years before the birth of Christ. The true and legitimate meaning, therefore, of the word, is the same as in verses 16 and 28 of this very chapter. "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the *tribes* of Israel." "All these are the twelve *tribes* of Israel." The import of this part of the prediction, therefore, is plainly this: that the tribe of Judah should not be scattered and confounded, as the rest of the tribes of Jacob would be, but should remain a distinct tribe, known by genealogy until the Messiah should have come. Thus great care was taken, by numbering this tribe, 1 Sam. 11 : 8. 2 Sam. 24, to preserve its genealogy. 2 Chron. 12 : 15. 13 : 22.

§ 11. The next sentence descriptive of the time of Messiah's advent is thus expressed: "Nor a lawgiver from between his feet." The word *mechokek* is variously translated. The radical meaning of the word is "to engrave." Hence are derived laws, statutes, kings, rulers, leaders, scribes, teachers. Now the word in this passage cannot mean a

lawgiver; for no tribe had a right to make any laws; for God himself was the lawgiver, and by his laws the king himself was to be governed. But each tribe had its prince or ruler, not to make laws, but, like magistrates, to judge the tribe by the laws of God; or, as the three Targums and other Jewish writers expound it, "the scribes and teachers of the law."

From what has been said, I trust my dear Benjamin will perceive that Shiloh, the Messiah, was to appear whilst Judah was a distinct tribe, having its genealogies, and its magistrates, scribes, lawyers, and expounders of God's laws. But it is an undeniable fact that the tribe of Judah, as well as all the other tribes, has lost its genealogies for more than seventeen hundred years; and therefore the Messiah must have appeared, or the prediction is false. To assert the latter, would be blasphemy; to deny the former, is unreasonable.

Farewell.

Letter II.

THE TEMPLE IS DESTROYED, AND DANIEL'S WEEKS
EXPIRED.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. It was a law in Israel, that "at the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter was to be established." In my last letter I have shown, from the testimony of the patriarch Jacob, that the Messiah must have come long since, for the distinction of the tribe of Judah has utterly departed. I shall now appeal to the testimony of the prophets, who declare that the Messiah was to appear during the existence

of the second temple. We shall first attend to that of Haggai, ch. 2 : 1-9. " In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory ? and how do you see it now ? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing ? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord ; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest ; and be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work : for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you : fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come : and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts : and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." I shall endeavor to show, *that by this house is meant the second, and not a third temple ; and that by the desire of all nations is meant the Messiah.*

§ 2. To begin with the former, viz. that by *this house* is meant the second temple, and not a third. Our Rabbins, convinced that, if the second temple is meant, the Messiah must have come, have recourse to those passages of Scripture which speak of a third temple. That a third temple will be built, I have no doubt, but what has that to do with the subject under consideration ? It is certain the prophet spake of the temple that was then building, as appears, 1, from the design of the prophecy, which was to encourage them in their work. No sooner had our fathers com-

menced the work of the Lord, and laid the foundation of the second temple, but they were greatly discouraged, partly by the opposition and actual prohibition of the kings of Persia, who had given credit to slanderous and false reports; (as it will ever be the experience of those who are sincerely engaged in doing the Lord's work;) and partly by the consideration of their poverty and inability to make this house any thing like the glorious and magnificent temple of Solomon. Hence, the old men among the people, who had seen the *former house* in its glory, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this laid, Ezra, 4 : 12, 13. This caused the building to cease for some years. The former of these discouragements being removed by the good will of Darius Hystaspes, the Lord sent the prophet to remove the second, and to support them by the promise, that notwithstanding their own poverty and inability to make this temple as splendid and glorious as the former was, yet he would make it exceed the former in glory, by sending the Desire of all nations, &c. This was calculated, indeed, to produce the desirable effect which it actually did produce, viz. to encourage and animate them in the good cause of building the house of God; but if a third temple had been understood, what encouragement would that have been to the generation who could not expect to behold its glory? Nor, 2, would a third temple agree with the time mentioned, "yet a little while," which, if the Messiah has not yet come, is more than two thousand years, and can in no sense be called a "little time." 3. The pronoun *this*, prefixed to the word *house*, and the repetition of the definite article, is as if the prophet had pointed with the finger, and said, *this* house which you now build, which you see before your eyes, and which is considered so contemptible, will be more glorious than the former. 4. The manner of expressing the comparison, by opposing the *latter* to the *former*, is the same as in Exod. 4 : 8, 9, where it is allowed on all hands, that it means the *first* and

second, and not a *third*. 5. Our modern Rabbins tell us that the Messiah himself shall build the third temple; but the prophet here saith that the temple which they had already commenced, was to be completed, and *then* the Desire of all nations should come unto it. 6. That the prophet spake of the second, and not of a third temple, is acknowledged by the most ancient and most learned of our Rabbins. Zohar Ex. fol. 431. R. Azaria Meor Enayim. Yarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, and Targum Jonathan in loco. Lastly, it is confirmed by a similar prediction delivered by the prophet Malachi, chap. 3 : 1, which I shall presently notice more particularly.

§ 3. I will now proceed to show, that by the desire of all nations, is meant the Messiah. This is indeed acknowledged by some of the ancient Jewish writers. Sanhedrim, fol. 97, 2; but the modern Rabbins, to evade the argument in favor of the opinion that the Messiah must have come already, will persuade us, that by the "desire of all nations," is meant the "desirable things," such as gold and silver, as presents, to be brought into this temple. This opinion scarcely deserves our notice. I will, however, observe, that it is contrary to the grammatical construction of the text; foreign to the design of the prediction; utterly unworthy of the solemn expression "thus saith the Lord of hosts," repeated so often in the text; far too low for the circumstances mentioned, to usher in the coming of the Messiah, as shaking the heavens and the earth, &c. &c.; it is an opinion contrary to facts, for far greater presents were brought to Solomon's temple than to this; it is in direct opposition to the intimation of Jehovah, that the glory should not consist in gold or silver; it is beyond all contradiction that this temple fell far short of the glory of the former temple, in all that the world would call great and glorious, as well as in matters of religion and worship; as our Rabbins themselves confess that five things were wanted in the second temple, viz. the ark with the propitiation and cheru-

bims; the fire from heaven; the Holy Spirit, or spirit of prophecy; the presence or glory of Jehovah; and the Urim and Thummim; lastly, the description given in this prediction, and in the paralleled one of Malachi, perfectly suits and agrees with the Messiah. It was promised that in him should all the families of the earth be blessed; and again, that to him should be the expectation or desire, the gathering or obedience of the people; and the prince, the pattern, and procurer of peace. Now, my dear Benjamin, after this plain and brief statement, am I not justified in concluding that the Messiah must have come long since; for it is evident he was to appear in the second temple, and to be its glory, excelling the glory of the former temple; but the second temple was destroyed nearly 1800 years ago, therefore the Messiah must have come, or the prediction is false; to say the latter, would be to make God a liar, to believe the former, is my duty and my happiness.

§ 4. I have already hinted that the prediction of Haggai is strengthened by a parallel prophecy of Malachi, chap. 3: 1, which needs but a moment's consideration. It is expressed thus: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and Jehovah, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." In this prediction the coming of the Messiah is again promised; with the addition, that he shall have an harbinger to prepare his way; and that his coming would be an awful judgment to the wicked, and great joy and consolation to the righteous. This promise of the coming of the Messiah was occasioned by the scoffing, wicked, and blasphemous inquiry with which the preceding chapter closed, viz. "Where is the God of judgment?" In answer to it the prophet declares, "he shall suddenly come to his temple:" which some of the Rabbins thus explain: "God will raise up a righteous king to set things in order, even the king Messiah." On the present occasion, I

shall not take notice of the harbinger, (which must be considered in a future letter,) nor of the effects of Messiah's coming, but observe,

§ 5. First, That by "Jehovah who should come" and "the messenger of the covenant," is meant the Messiah. Most of our learned Rabbins agree that Jehovah and the messenger is one and the same person; and Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Ber. Rab. § 16, f. 219, c. 4, and others, acknowledge that the messenger of the covenant is the Messiah; yea, R. Tanchum saith, "*without doubt it is the Messiah.*" The titles well agree with him, who is frequently called "Jehovah," and the "angel Jehovah," and is promised as a "covenant to the people." Isa. 42:6. 49:8. The description given of him as the person "sought after," and "delighted in," also agrees best with the Messiah; as we have seen already that he was to be "the desire of all nations," and that such a desire existed especially about the time of the coming of Jesus Christ.

§ 6. I observe, secondly, that the Messiah shall come "to his temple,"—the temple built in the days of Malachi, the second temple; peculiarly *his* temple, for he was to appear in it to be its glory, and the substance of all it was designed to shadow forth by all its rites and ceremonies. To this temple he should come "suddenly," i. e. immediately, after his harbinger had appeared to prepare the way before him. Thus, my dear Benjamin, it is evident, from the united testimony of the prophets Haggai and Malachi, that the Messiah was to appear during the existence of the second temple; but the second temple has been utterly destroyed more than seventeen hundred years ago, and therefore the Messiah must have come long since.

§ 7. But as this subject is the hinge of the whole religious controversy between Jews and Christians, as has already been observed, and is therefore of so much greater importance to be well established, I shall produce another; roof that the Messiah must have come long ago, for he

was to appear before the sacrifices and oblations ceased. This will clearly appear, if we consider the very remarkable prophecy contained in the ninth chapter of Daniel, from the 24th to the 27th verse: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

§ 8. The pious and learned Dr. Pye Smith, of London, hath made some judicious and important alterations in his translation of this passage. "Seventy weeks are determined on with regard to the holy city, to restrain the rebellion, and to put a complete end to sin, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to introduce a righteousness (which shall be for) ages, and to put a complete end to vision and prophecy, and to constitute the most Holy One the Messiah. Know thou, and deeply consider, (that) from the going forth of the (Divine) word for the return and for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, to the Messiah, the Leader, shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. Thou shalt return, and it shall be rebuilt, both the street and the ruined wall, even in distressful times.

And after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah shall be cut off; but not for himself. And the people of a leader to come shall destroy both the city and the sanctuary; and its end shall be with an invasion, and to the end of the war desolations are determined. Also, one week shall confirm the covenant with many; and half a week shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease. And upon the pinnacle shall be the abominations of desolation; and yet he will pour out the consolation determined upon the desolate."

§ 9. The occasion of this important prophecy seems to have been this: the prophet Daniel, having understood by books, especially the prophecy of Jeremiah, that it would be a seventy years' captivity, fell into a very great concern of mind for his people, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, and therefore set apart some time in fasting and prayer to God. His prayer was very quickly heard, and a gracious answer returned. Even at the beginning of his supplication, the commandment came forth, orders were given, and Gabriel was despatched as a messenger, informing Daniel that there would be a royal edict in favor of the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem; and that after a certain period of time, here specified, the Messiah, the Prince, would be cut off; and quickly after that the city and the temple would be destroyed, and the Jewish nation dispersed. In a word, in this prediction we have a summary of the Old Testament, the substance of all temple-service or institution, the centre of all promises, and a brief but most comprehensive description of the whole work of the Messiah.

§ 10. Two inquiries, if properly answered, will make this important prediction plain and conclusive. We must first inquire into the period of time, how many years it contains, and when it commenced; and secondly, into the events that were to take place during this period. This will be the subject of my next letter. Meanwhile, my beloved brother,

Farewell.

Letter III.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Dear Brother, agreeably to my promise, I will now endeavor to answer the questions proposed relative to the prediction recorded in Daniel, ch. 9 : 24-27.

§ 1. First, it is asked, how many years are included in the 70 weeks ? and when did they begin ? With respect to the first part of the question, it is agreed by all, that the seventy *weeks* are weeks of years, i. e. every week is seven years, making, in the whole, four hundred and ninety years. Sal. Yarchi, Saad. Gaon, and Aben Ezra in loco. Aben-Jana in Michl. Yophi, in loco. It was a frequent mode to count years by weeks. Thus Laban said to Jacob, “fulfill her *week*,” or fill up a week for this, i. e. serve me *seven* years for this. Gen. 29 : 27. The jubilees also were reckoned by weeks of years, Lev. 25 : 8. Ez. 4 : 4, 5. These 70 weeks, or 490 years, are divided into 7, 62, and 1 week, on account of some remarkable events which should take place at the close of these distinct periods.

§ 2. With respect to the second part of the question, viz. when did these 70 weeks begin ? we shall receive a satisfactory answer by considering the second question, viz. the events which were to take place. To this consideration we will now proceed. 1. Within the first period mentioned, viz. 7 weeks, or 49 years, from the going forth of the decree, the city of Jerusalem, and the walls thereof, should be rebuilt. The giving forth of the decree or commandment, therefore, is the beginning of the seven weeks. But as there are four decrees mentioned by Ezra and Nehemiah, there seems, at first sight, a difficulty, which is the decree alluded to in this

passage ; but this difficulty will vanish, if we consider the different decrees. The first was made by Cyrus, in the first year of his reign. Ezra, ch. 1 : 2, 3. The second by Darius Hystaspes, Ezra, ch. 6 ; and two by Artaxerxes Longimanus, the first in the seventh year of his reign, Ez. 7 : 7, 13, 21 ; and the second in the twentieth year of his reign, Neh. 2 : 1, 6-8. Now, in the first three decrees that were made, the building of the *Lord's house only* is mentioned ; the building of the *city* and the *walls* is mentioned only in the last decree, and *that*, therefore, must be the epoch where the seventy weeks commence.

§ 3. Thus we see the first event to take place, was the building of the city and the walls of Jerusalem. We will now consider, 2. the events to take place during the second period mentioned, viz. 62 weeks after the expiration of the preceding 7 weeks ; i. e. 69 weeks, or 483 years from the decree to build the city and the walls of Jerusalem. The first event, which was to take place at the close of this period, is the most remarkable and the most important that ever took place, viz. the death of the Messiah, or the work of redemption which he was to accomplish. As this passage contains a prophetical description of the work of the Messiah, I hope my dear Benjamin will give me leave to dwell for a few moments on the subject. I will show, *first*, that the Messiah is meant here ; and *secondly*, the manner in which he was to accomplish the work.

§ 4. That the person said to be cut off, is the promised Messiah, will appear, 1. From the titles given to him. He is called *Messiah*. This name was well known among the Jews, and that in the time of Jesus Christ, as belonging to that great person spoken of by all the prophets ; it is used from 60 to 70 times in the Targums. Now, if this prediction does not belong to him, it will be hard to find another place where it is absolutely, and by way of eminency, given unto him ; and as we find the Jews were acquainted with that name, John, 1 : 47 ; 4 : 25, they must have learned it from

some of the prophecies, and it can hardly be conceived from whence, unless from that now before us. The next title is *Nagid*, a prince; by the same name Messiah is called, Isa. 55: 4, "Behold, I have given him for a prince and a commander to the people;" this passage is applied to the Messiah in Targum Jonathan. Again, he is called "the Most Holy," "to anoint the Most Holy." This cannot mean the temple, for it is the unanimous belief of our Rabbins that the holy oil was one of the five things wanting in the second temple. It is therefore applied by most of our Jewish writers to the Messiah. Ab. Ezra in loco. Moses Gerundeas in loco. Abarbanel in Wagenseil. Mantissa de LXX. Hede-mad. Dan. p. 64.

2. It appears also from the testimony of our ancient Rabbins, that the Messiah is the person spoken of in this prediction. Abarbanel says, "to anoint the Most Holy is to be explained of the Messiah our Righteousness; for as the children of Israel, in general, are called holy, as it is said, 'ye shall be holy,' again, 'Israel is holy unto the Lord;' therefore the Messiah, who is to be more holy than all Israel, is called 'the Most Holy.'" Myanai Hyshua. fol. 64, c. 1, 2. R. Nachmun, in loco, saith, "the Most Holy is the Messiah, for he is more holy than the children of David." R. Azaria in meor enayin P. 3, ch. 43, saith, "To seal vision and prophecy, and to bring in Messiah our Righteousness." Maimonides also acknowledges that the period of time revealed to Daniel by Gabriel, relates to the Messiah; but that the Rabbins of blessed memory have said, "let the bones of him rot who attempts to compute the end;" and the reason they assigned, is, that because the common people, finding the end is come, i. e. the time specified is elapsed, might be led into an error to think that the Messiah has come already. Iggereth Hatterman fol. 125. c. 4.

§ 5. 3. It is still more evident that the person spoken of, in the prediction before us, is the Messiah, from the work ascribed to him. The different parts of the Messiah's work

are thus described : 1. "To finish the transgression," or rather to restrain, restrict, or shut up. "The seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent," "the Son of God was to be manifested to destroy the works of the devil." To take away the usurped dominion of that tyrant, and to set up a kingdom of holiness and love in the hearts of men, so that where sin and death had reigned, righteousness and life might reign through grace. This was to be effected by the doctrine, the spirit, and the grace of the Messiah. 2. "To make an end of sin," or to seal up sins. The common use and design of sealing a letter or parcel is, to conceal and hide its contents. Thus the metaphor used to seal up sins, i. e. to hide and conceal them, is to express the pardon of sin. Hence, Jehovah is said to "cast our sins behind his back, to cover them, and to cast them into the bottom of the sea." Hence, when sin is pardoned, it is sought for and not found, as that which is sealed up. The former expression refers to the *power*, this to the *guilt* of sin. Both belong to the work of the Messiah. 3. "To make reconciliation for iniquity," i. e. to propitiate, to appease, to make an atonement, to satisfy divine justice by the sacrifice of himself, and so to make peace. It is observable that there are three different words used, "Transgression, sin, and iniquity," perhaps to show that all manner of sins were to be expiated, pardoned, and restrained by the Messiah. Hence, the apostle, speaking of the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, saith, "it cleanses us from *all* sins." 4. "To bring in an everlasting righteousness." By our sins we lost the favor of God, became children of wrath, and heirs of hell; and God might justly have suffered us to perish with the devil and his angels. We have nothing of our own to plead; for, as the prophet saith, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," Isa. 66 : 4. Hence, with the pious Psalmist, we may well say, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified," Ps. 143 : 2; and we are assured by

another inspired writer, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified," Rom. 3 : 20; and if left to men or angels, Job's question could never have received a satisfactory answer: "How should man be just with God?" Job, 9 : 2, or "how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Job, 25 : 4. But blessed be the Lord God of our salvation! who hath laid our help upon one mighty to save. "In me," saith Jehovah Messiah, "shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and glory," Isa. 45 : 25. Hence, the Messiah is called "Jehovah our righteousness," Jer. 23 : 6. 33 : 16. By his life and death, doing and suffering the whole will of God, Messiah has wrought out a perfect righteousness, which is "unto all and upon all them that believe," Rom. 3 : 22. This is an "everlasting righteousness." It was provided in the everlasting counsel of Jehovah, and its blessed effects will be enjoyed in everlasting ages to come. 5. Another part of the Messiah's work was "to seal vision and prophecy;" i. e. to consummate and establish; to finish and conclude. All the visions and prophecies had a reference to the Messiah. For the law and the prophets were until John, and then they were to be fulfilled. The spirit of prophecy also was to cease. After the Messiah shall have fulfilled all that was predicted concerning him, he would seal up and put an end to visions and prophecy. Such is the work which the Messiah was to accomplish, and to qualify him for it he was to be *anointed*. To be anointed, not with material oil, which ceased with the destruction of Solomon's temple, but with the Holy Ghost, the oil of gladness, which he was to receive without measure, above his fellows. I hope, my dear Benjamin, you will particularly take notice how clearly it does appear from this prediction, as well as from many other passages of Scripture, (which will be considered hereafter,) and from the covenant engagement of the Messiah, which has already been stated, that the great end and design of his *first* advent was entirely of a spiritual nature, and not

a mere delivery of our nation only from the Roman yoke, and to raise them to power and wealth.

§ 6. Having shown that the Messiah is meant in this prediction, we will now consider the peculiar way in which he was to accomplish his work. This was to be by enduring a *violent death*. "Messiah, the Prince, shall be cut off, but not for himself." The word *carath*, to be cut off, has a reference to a judicial sentence pronounced on the criminal, Gen. 17 : 14. Ex. 12 : 15; so that it is here predicted that the Messiah was not only to die, but that his death should be *penal*. But whilst the penal death of Messiah is predicted, his innocency is at the same time asserted. "Not for himself," i. e. there was no cause of death in him; as the prophet Isaiah declared at large in the 53d chap. "that he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth; but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed: he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken." That the whole of this chapter relates to the Messiah, and was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, will be made evident hereafter.

§ 7. The next events to take place at the close of the sixty-two weeks, are the beseiging of the city of Jerusalem, and its utter destruction, together with the temple. After the cutting off of Messiah, the Prince, the destruction of the city and temple, and the dispersion of our nation was quickly to ensue, ver. 26. A people under the direction of a prince, leader or commander, should enter into the land of Judea, make war there, destroy the city of Jerusalem and the famous temple; and the destruction should be as universal as a mighty *flood* or violent inundation, it should overspread the whole country, and carry all before it; for from the beginning of the war to the end thereof, utter ruin and destruction is determined by God upon the people and nation.

During the last week or seven years, a covenant was to

be confirmed, the sacrifices and oblations were to cease, and our nation scattered, until the desolator be utterly destroyed.

§ 8. In a future letter I shall show you the exact fulfillment of all these events, and then give you a more particular explanation of some expressions used in this prediction. In the meantime, I trust, my dear Benjamin, that you will be convinced that the Messiah was to appear, and to die before the second temple was destroyed, and before the sacrifices ceased, and before our nation be scattered abroad. But the temple has been destroyed, the sacrifices have ceased, and our nation has been scattered; therefore we justly conclude that the Messiah must have appeared long ago. This conclusion is the result of the united and harmonious testimony of the Patriarch Jacob, of the inspired prophets Haggai and Malachi, and of the humble and pious Daniel, who received his knowledge from the angel Gabriel, sent for the express purpose to make known the time and the events of the coming of the Messiah.

§ 9. As an additional argument, I might here mention a number of our wise men's sayings, which show that the Messiah must have come long ago. For example, R. Nehemiah, who lived about fifty years before the coming of Christ, declared that the time of the Messiah, as signified by Daniel, could not be protracted longer than fifty years. It is also a well known tradition in the Talmud, Sanhed. Cheleck, f. 97, 1, that the famous Rabbi Elijah had taught that the world should continue six thousand years, two thousand void, (i. e. without the law, from the creation until the call of Abraham: see the Gloss. of Yarchi, in loco,) two thousand under the Law, and two thousand under the Messiah." Now, as the third period of two thousand years under the reign of the Messiah is nearly expired, the Messiah must have come long ago. See also Yarchi's commentary on the preceding passage. And in his comment on Avoda Sara, fol. 91, he saith, "Six thousand years are determined for the duration of the world, according to the days of the

week, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath, so in the seventh thousand year shall be rest to the world." These considerations have greatly perplexed our modern Rabbins, and I am aware, my brother, of their evasions to weaken the arguments; I have well examined them, and found that they are "refuges of lies," weaker than a spider's web, scarcely worthy to be noticed; yet as they are generally believed by our people, their fallacy shall be shown in my next letter.

§ 9. I shall now conclude with the following pointed observations, addressed to our nation by the Rev. Stanley — Faber, who sheds lustre upon the prophecies, and whatever else he takes in hand: "You would do well, therefore, to turn your serious attention to this remarkable prophecy contained in your own Scriptures. Prejudice may shut the eyes against the clearest circumstantial evidence, and a Jew may be unable to discover in the predictions of Isaiah, any thing that resembles the events detailed in the history of him whom Christians acknowledge as the Messiah; but the case is different with numerical evidence. *Circumstantial* evidence resembles moral truth, of which there may be an infinite variety of shades. *Numerical* evidence resembles mathematical truth, which admits of no shades; its boast is unity and perfection; if it be not absolute unmixed truth, it is palpable falsehood. A Jew may conceive, hard as it may be to a Christian to comprehend the possibility of such a thing, yet a Jew may conceive that the predictions of a suffering Messiah were not accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth, but that they will at length receive their accomplishment in your imaginary Messiah, *ben Joseph*. But the stubbornness of numbers bids defiance to the mischievous ingenuity of the most determined prejudice. Either the Messiah must be come, or Daniel was a false prophet; no other alternative is possible; no evasion is practicable. To every subterfuge, to every reply that can be painfully framed by the Hebrew, writhing under the lash of incontrovertible evidence, the

unbending rigidity of mathematical demonstration still proclaims aloud, *either the Messiah must be come, or Daniel was a false prophet*. Compute the seventy weeks as you will, divide them and subdivide them as you please, admit or reject intercalations, take solar years or take lunar years, reckon from what edict you most affect, perplex chronology as much as you think proper, curtail, with your brethren in the days of Adrian, the Persian monarchy by two hundred years, to put off the evil day of the expiration of these seventy weeks, still will the refractory number refuse either to bend or to break. Long since must the fated seventy weeks have expired, according to any hypothesis that can be contrived. How then can the Jews deny that the Messiah is come, consistently with their belief in the divine inspiration of Daniel?"

Letter IV.

EVASIONS CONFUTED.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. According to promise, I shall in this letter show the fallacy and weakness of those opinions which our Rabbins have advanced to evade the convictions which must arise from the preceding arguments, that the Messiah must have come. I have selected those which they mention most frequently, and consider the most forcible. 1. They will persuade us that the sceptre has not departed from *Judah*, that there are still kings in *Israel*. This assertion rests solely on the story of Rabbi Gerson, in his book *Geliloth Eretz*, where he affirms, with *an oath*, that he will not lie in a *single* letter, but relate what he himself has seen. He then

informs us that in his travels he found a river sixteen miles in breadth, each mile eight thousand feet long; the water flowing with such rapidity that the sound thereof is heard at a distance of two day's journey. This river, he saith, is called Sabbatyon or Sambatyon, because, though it throws up large stones as high as a house all the week through, yet it rests and becomes perfectly dry two hours before the commencement of the Sabbath, and begins again to run, with all its fury, as soon as the Sabbath is ended. Beyond this river, he affirms, there are as many Jews as the sand of the sea, living in great affluence and plenty. They have twenty-four kings, and a powerful king is over the whole. With respect to their descent, he saith, some think they are of the family of Moses, others say they are a part of the ten tribes. Thus much I thought it necessary to quote of this wretched story.

§ 2. Such is the sandy foundation upon which rests the superstructure that the sceptre is not yet departed from Judah. How ridiculous the fiction! Who would suppose that any man in his right senses would for a moment give credit to it? Yet, my dear brother, you well know that our people believe it, for they have incorporated it in the prayer or song for the Sabbath day. So awfully true is it, that when a people wilfully reject the truth, a just and righteous God will give them up to believe a lie. Is it credible that there should exist such a wonderful river in any part of the world, and yet never seen by any traveler, nor described by any historian except Rabbi Gerson? He tells us that the Turks carry on an extensive commerce with these people beyond the river, sending them iron, and getting an equal weight of gold by way of barter. Strange that no other merchants, either in the old or new world, have attempted to have a share in so lucrative and unparalleled a traffic. Besides, if there be such a river, how could Rabbi Gerson *see* the things which exist in that country, seeing that during the week he could not cross it, else the river would have stoned him;

on the Sabbath he dare not cross it, else he would have been stoned to death according to the law; nor could he cross it during the two hours before the Sabbath, for the breadth, he saith, was not less than 24 miles, English measure. Other circumstances, too, are related by this historian which appear absolutely impossible. As for example, he declares that their great king goes often to war with the neighboring nations if they fail of paying their tribute or taxes. On such occasions he is accompanied by no less than 180,000 horse in full armor, and by a force of infantry without number. And all this immense multitude crossed the river during the two hours of rest before the Sabbath commences! Can this be true? But who dare to deny it? For our famous Rabbi Gerson has bound himself by *oath* to declare nothing but what he himself has *seen*.

Well, dear Benjamin, let it be true, say there are 24 kings beyond the river Sambatyon; what then? Why, then, the sceptre has not departed. Let it remain, and what has that to do with the prediction of Jacob? These kings and their subjects, our historian tells us, are either the descendants of the family of Moses, who was of the tribe of Levi, or of the ten tribes. But the Patriarch spake of the tribe of *Judah*. Some of our *wise* men, of blessed memory, have been *wise enough* to perceive that this evasion will not bear examination, and therefore have invented another, saying:

§ 3. 2. That the sceptre was not to depart *for ever*, when the Messiah shall come. This opinion rests upon the separation of the two particles, *Ad* and *Ki*, translated *until*. Now, my brother, you know too much of Hebrew to be informed that this separation of the particles is *contrary* to the use of the accent *yethiv*, which joins the words generally, and perhaps always, (Gen. 50 : 15. 1 Kings, 14 : 23,) and is absolutely separated from sceptre and lawgiver by the accent *Athnach*. Besides, it contradicts the opinions of our Rabbins, who say that Messiah shall not reign for ever, but only 40 years, according to some; 70, according

to others, and 400 years, according to others. This translation, therefore, has been abandoned by many, and instead of it,

§ 4. 3. They translate the word *Shevet*, a *Rod*; i. e. the rod of *affliction* shall not depart from Judah, until the Messiah come. It is true, the word may signify a rod of affliction, but it is not applicable to Judah; for until the destruction of the second temple, Judah prospered more than all the other tribes. The royal sceptre continued about 500 years; when the ten tribes were carried away, Judah still dwelled in peace; and when they afterward were carried to Babylon, their captivity was only 70 years. Besides, the prediction commences thus, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall *praise*;" which includes a blessing on Judah, expressive of dignity and honor, and not of affliction and sorrow. This translation also has been given up, and it has been supposed by some,

§ 5. 4. That Shiloh means a city, i. e. the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until he or it, i. e. the Ark, which shall be taken in Shiloh.* The absurdity of this notion is too evident to

* *Note.* "There have been certain German critics, who call themselves Rationalists; but who would not have much reason to complain, if we were to denominate them infidels, since they deny any *immediate* revelation of truth and religion from God, and conceive themselves to be better judges of Biblical subjects than Jesus and his apostles were. Some of these (assuming very modestly that this poem, which is expressly declared, ver. 1, to be the dying farewell and prophetic monition of Jacob, is a composition of the age of David or Solomon) interpret *Shiloh* as the name of the town so called, near the mountains of Ephraim, and render the clause—'till he come to Shiloh,' 'the tribe of Judah, which had occupied the chief place in the marches and encampments in the wilderness, shall not lay aside that honor, till the tribes shall disperse from the common standard, each to its own allotment; which dispersion shall take place in Shiloh.' See Josh. 18 and 22. 'To this interpretation the following objections occur: The terms of the passage do not accord with any facts in the march through the desert, or the

need any confutation. Nothing is said in the text of the Ark. Nor was there a sceptre in Judah until after they had come to Shiloh. Besides, we have already shown that all the ancient Rabbins and wise men understood by Shiloh, the king Messiah, and not a city. To *him* was to be the expectation, gathering, and obedience of the people.

§ 6. David Levi, in his notes on the Pent. says: "A number of commentators have attempted to explain this passage (Gen. 49 : 10) in different senses. Some explain it thus, the rod of affliction and captivity, and with which, as it were, their feet are bound, shall not depart, till the coming of Shiloh, i. e. the Messiah. For they understand the word *Shevet*, not to denote an ensign of royalty, but a *rod*; the same as in Exod. 21 : 20. And others explain it, that *yasoor* does not denote to depart, but to bloom, as in Jer. 2 : 21. The regal power of Judah, i. e. the kingdom of the house of David, shall not bloom till Shiloh *goes down*; till the city of Shiloh loses its dignity. Agreeable to what the Psalmist says, Ps. 78 : 70. And he chose David his servant, &c. In this manner do numbers proceed, every one after his own fancy. But what I take to be the true meaning of the passage, is, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah for ever, but will return in the days of the Messiah; and which seems to coincide with what he said in verse first, 'Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days,' and which are certainly meant of the coming of the Messiah; when the

occupation of Canaan. Judah possessed no more authority than any other tribe. The *sceptre* and *legislation* were in the hands of Moses, a Levite, and the subsequent command was conferred on Joshua, an Ephraimite.' 'This interpretation would not have merited notice, but as a specimen of that noxious pseudo criticism, whose characters are self-admiring arrogance and manifest irreligion, employing a prodigious machinery of perverted learning, to compress all in Scriptures that is most solemn and important, into insignificance and nullity.'—Dr. P. Smith, *Scripture Testimony of the Messiah*.

kingdom will return to Judah; or, according to the first explanation that I mentioned, which will also be in the latter days." None of these evasions bearing the light of examination and argument, continuing in force and strengthened by the other predictions which we have considered, it has at last been granted that the period of time fixed and made known at which the Messiah should appear, expired at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and that on account of the sins and wickedness of the people.

§ 7. 5. The Messiah was either then born at Bethlehem, and hid himself, and is kept in chains; or, that his coming was delayed until Israel shall repent and perform good works. See R. Bechai in Lege f. 68, c. 2. Aben Ezra on Isa. 52 : 13; also on Cant. 7 : 5. See also Echa Rab. fol. 300, c. 1, and in Nezach Israel, ch. 25, fol. 38, 1, and ch. 50, fol. 57, c. 3. Some say he is in paradise. Avodath Hackodesh, ch. 43, fol. 55, c. 2. Others say he is at Rome. Sanhed. f. 97, 1. 98, 1. Ab. Ezra on Cant. 7 : 5. Targum on Micah, 4 : 8. Buxtorf. Syn. Jud. c. 50. This opinion rests upon their assertion that the promise of a Messiah was *conditional*; viz. that if all Israel be righteous, then Messiah will come at the time appointed; if not, his appearance will be delayed. Now as this is the present prevailing sentiment of our people, it deserves more particular attention.

§ 8. 1. The notion of a conditional promise concerning the Messiah is contrary to the distinction made by our Rabbins between a promise and a threatening. For you well know that they have laid it down as a principle, that God's threatenings are conditional, i. e. if men repent, they will not be executed; but the promises are unconditional. Hence they say if a prophet announces threatenings, and they do not come, it is no proof that he is a false prophet; but if he promises good, and it does not come to pass, it is a sure sign that he is a false prophet. R. Sepharono apud R. Judah Muscato in Sepher Cosri, f. 43, c. 1. Talmud Tanith, f. 25, c. 1. Erachin, f. 15, 1. This principle seems to be reason-

able and scriptural. Threatenings are in consequence of sin; if sin be repented of and forsaken, God may consistently withhold the evil threatened; but promises of blessings flow from free love, which is no respecter of persons, and unchangeable. Hence, Numb. 23 : 19, it is said, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Again, Rom. 11 : 29, "The gifts and callings of God are without repentance; i. e. God never repents of what he gives, whether by promise or actual bestowment. To return to our argument: the Messiah was either an evil threatened, or a blessing promised. The former cannot be the case, else why has he ever been the desire and prayer of our people? Surely no man is anxious for the approach of evil. He must therefore have been promised as a blessing, and as such it could not be delayed. Yet it is asserted by our people, who reject Jesus Christ, that the Messiah did not come at the appointed time, consequently the patriarchs and the prophets have delivered falsehoods. Hence some of our more judicious writers have acknowledged that the promise of a Messiah is absolute, as R. Bechai in *Lege*, f. 149, c. 4. Shemoth Rab. f. 116, c. 3. and Abarbanel in *Sepher Emuneth*, c. 14. saith, "if Israel be worthy, the Messiah will come sooner; if they are unworthy, yet he shall come at the time predicted, as it is written, Isa. 60 : 22." As the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian bondage and from the Babylonish captivity were fixed and unconditional, so was the promise of the Messiah to deliver us from spiritual bondage and captivity unconditional.

§ 9. Again, 2. There is no condition mentioned in any of the promises respecting the Messiah. And so far is it from being true that the people were to be all righteous at the coming of the Messiah, that the prophets declare the very reverse. Isa. 53 : 3. Jer. 34 : 32, 33. Dan. 9 : 24. Zech. 13 : 1. Mal. 3 : 4. It is also expressly said by the

Rabbins, that the generation in which the Messiah shall come will be worse than the Sodomites. Sanhed. f. 97, c. 1. Masech. Derech. Eretz. Sota, f. 21, 1. Tract. Sota, f. 49, 2. Pesikta Rab. f. 28, 3, 4. Shirhashirim Rab. f. 260, 2.

§ 10. 3. Repentance and good works cannot be the condition; for it must either be in their own power to perform the condition, or they must be enabled by God to do it. If the former be the case, why do our people defer it? Seeing that they expect from the Messiah riches, and honors, and pleasures? why does our nation spend its time and strength in the pursuit of trifles, and neglect the great things promised, especially as our Rabbins say that if all Israel were to keep only *one* Sabbath holy, the Messiah would immediately come? Shemoth Rabba, f. 116, 3. Shirhashshirim Rab. f. 269, 1. Kimchi on Isa. 56: 2. R. Bechai in Lege, f. 64, 2. Sanhed. 97, 2. Pirke Elieser, ch. 43, and Avkoth Rochel. And if it be the work of the Spirit to cause them to repent, how is it he did not do it at the time appointed for the coming of the Messiah? Besides, when God revealed the time of the coming of the Messiah, he either foresaw what would be the condition of our nation as to their repentance and good works, or he did not. To say he did not, would be blasphemy; if he did know it, why give these specific predictions of time and circumstances which he knew would not come to pass?

§ 11. 4. If the coming of the Messiah be conditional, then there is a possibility that he may not come at all. If God hath delayed it for these 1800 years, why may he not delay it altogether? What stronger motives can be held out than those held out to our fathers, when God sent his own Son, who was an inexhaustible fountain of benevolence and kindness, to the poor, the blind, the lame and the sick; who fed the hungry, comforted the mourners, and raised the dead; and for all this they did not repent, but added the greatest iniquity to their former crimes, by crucifying the Lord of glory, and rejecting the offered mercy after his resurrection?

§ 12. 5. We observe, further, that the Messiah was promised to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Has God, out of infinite love, grace, and mercy, made so many promises to, and excited the expectations of all nations, of the Messiah, and can we suppose that he will disappoint them, and make his truth and grace of none effect, because of the disobedience of the Jews?

§ 13. 6. This opinion, also, is contrary to the sentiments advanced by our Rabbins on other occasions. You well know, that when the sufferings of the Messiah are urged from the 53d chap. of Isaiah, they will have us to believe that it is not the Messiah, but the whole house of Israel the prophet was speaking of, and that they were so holy as to be without guile, &c. but suffered, to atone for the sins of the heathen. We are also taught, that on the day of atonement all the sins of Israel are forgiven. What need then is there for repentance, if they are so righteous, and have all their sins forgiven? Besides, if we can believe what our Rabbins tell us, then it is evident that the want of repentance cannot be the cause of the non-appearance of the Messiah; for they assure us, in Shalsheleth Hackabala, "that in the year 5,260 A. M. or A. D. 1500, a person, by the name of Asher Lemlé, gave himself out for a prophet, and declared that the Messiah would immediately appear if the people did repent. The people gave credit to his story throughout Italy, and they repented every one of his evil way and forsook their sins; their repentance was like that of the Ninevites; but the prophet soon after died, and the Messiah did not appear. We observe but once more,

§ 14. 7. That the notion of the Messiah's coming having been delayed by the wickedness of our people, is in direct opposition to the design and work of the Messiah. It has already been shown, that the work and design of the Messiah is to deliver men from the guilt and power of sin. Now, if the Messiah was not to come till all Israel be righteous, then they would not need him. The whole needeth

not a Physician, nor the righteous a Savior. But there is none righteous, no not one; they have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Messiah was to procure our repentance, and not to be procured by it. Hence Peter and the other apostles addressing the high priest, declared that "the God of our fathers had raised up Jesus the Messiah, and exalted him with his right hand, to be a Prince and Savior, for to *give* repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts, 5: 30, 31. I hope, my dear Benjamin, you perceive the futility of the inventions of our Rabbins to subvert the arguments which show that the Messiah must have come already. In my next letter I will endeavor to prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. May the Spirit of God lead you into all truth. Amen.

Father of faithful Abraham, hear
Our earnest suit for Abraham's seed
Justly they claim the softest pray'r
From us, adopted in their stead,
Who mercy through their fall obtain,
And Christ, by their rejection, gain.

Outcast from thee, and scatter'd wide
Through ev'ry nation under heav'n,
Blaspheming whom they crucify'd,
Unsav'd, unpity'd, unforgiv'n;
Branded, like Cain, they bear their load,
Abhorr'd of men, and curst of God.

But hast thou finally forsook,
For ever cast thy own away?
Wilt thou not bid the murd'ers look
On him they pierc'd, and weep and pray?
Yes, gracious Lord, thy word is past;
"All Israel shall be sav'd at last."

Come then, thou great Deliv'rer, come;
The veil from Jacob's heart remove;
Receive thy ancient people home,
That, quicken'd by thy dying love,
The world may their reception view,
And shout, to God, the glory due.

PART IV.

JESUS OF NAZARETH THE PROMISED MESSIAH.

Letter I.

INTRODUCTION.

Dear Brother,

Having in my former letters shown that the Messiah must have come long since, I will now inform you, as Philip did Nathaniel, saying, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth." John, 1 : 45.

§ 1. I will endeavor to show, that in Jesus Christ have been fulfilled all the predictions relating to the Messiah, as it respects the time of his first advent—his descent and birth—his character—his miracles—his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices—his sufferings, death and burial—his resurrection from the dead—his ascension into glory. After this, I shall endeavor to answer the chief objections brought against the Messiahship of Jesus.

§ 2. That there has been such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, as described by the Evangelists, is a fact which a Jew has no more reason to doubt, than a Christian has to call in question the existence of Moses, the deliverer of our nation. Yet a late *nameless* writer, styling himself "*an Israelite*," dares to call in question the real existence of Jesus Christ. He compares the evidences in favor of the existence of Moses, our legislator, and Christ, the founder of the Christian religion. Having stated, that, besides the sacred

Scriptures, we have also the testimony of an Egyptian writer, Manathon; of Choeremon of Greece, as also of Ly-simachus, Appion, Diodorus Siculus, and Tacitus, in favor of the existence of Moses; he boldly asserts that "the Nazarenes have no other evidence to establish the existence of the founder of their religion, than the testimony of 'four unlettered and interested men of our nation,' and that the Roman historian, Tacitus, has not only taken no notice of them, (i. e. the miracles of Jesus,) but even as to the *person* called Jesus, whom the Nazarenes worship, his history is *wholly silent*." Israel Vindicated, p. 30, 31. To convince my dear Benjamin that we have a great many more testimonies in favor of Jesus, than the Israelite has produced in favor of Moses, and particularly that Jesus Christ was publicly known as the founder of the Christian religion, from his death to the time at which it is alleged that his religion was first propagated, viz. A. D. 300. I shall transcribe the following testimonies, collected by an investigator: "In the Toldoth Yeshu," says the investigator, "which, there is good reason for believing, originally constituted a part of the Talmud, and in another book, entitled *Machril*, it is asserted of Jesus that he was the offspring of Joseph and Mary—that he was born in Bethlehem—that he was of the tribe of Judah, and of royal lineage—that he was remarkably acute in learning—that at an early age, he discovered great courage and boldness towards the elders—that he was skilled in magic—that he pretended to be born of a pure virgin—that he claimed to be the son of God, and applied to himself the prophecy of Isaiah, 7 : 14—that he claimed to himself the creation of the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that therein is—that the dry bones of a dead body were brought to him out of a sepulchre, and that he united bone to bone, clothed the whole with sinews, flesh, and skin, and that the body arose, stood upon its feet, and lived—that he healed a leper—that the Jews fell down and worshipped him, and said to him 'truly thou art the Son of God,'—

that he entered Jerusalem upon an ass, and that the whole city went out to meet him—that he applied to himself, Zech. 9: 9—that he wrought great wonders—that he charged the Jews with being a stiff-necked people—that he applied to himself the 2d and the 110th Psalms—that he prophesied of his ascension, and that he should sit at the right hand of God—that he walked upon the sea—that he was betrayed by Judas—that the number of his disciples amounted to 2000—that the Jews scourged him—that they crowned him with thorns—that they gave him vinegar to drink—that he applied to himself Ps. 69: 21; 22: 1—that he alleged his blood should be an atonement for all mankind, and applied to himself Isa. 53: 5—that he was put to death in the evening of the Passover—that he was buried before the Sabbath began—that the belief in him increased more and more for thirty years next after his decease, and that his followers, called Nazarenes, gathered themselves together, by thousands and tens of thousands—that such belief became strong and spread abroad—that he had twelve disciples, who traveled into twelve kingdoms and prophesied of him—that Israel went after them, and that some of them were men of reputation, and confirmed the doctrine of Yeshu, (Jesus,) and declared they were his messengers, and gathered unto them a great multitude from among the children of Israel. But these facts do not rest upon the Toldoth Yeshu and the Machril only, passages to the same effect are now to be found in both the Babylonish and the Jerusalem Talmuds. Vide Sanhedrim, Sabbath, Avodah Sarah, Masachteth Kallah, Sota, Gittin, Zeror Hammor, and many other Jewish writings.”

“In a Samaritan chronicle, beginning with Joshua and ending with Mahomet, Jesus is spoken of as the Messiah, and honorable mention is made of him and his disciples.”—Bishop Chandler. Dr. Hemdington. “The Koran of Mahomet testifies to the extraordinary character of John the Baptist; the miraculous conception of Christ; that he restored the dead to life, and performed most of the miracles re-

lated in the Gospels; that he will, at his second coming, unite all religions, and kill antichrist."—Sale's Koran, *passim*. "The Pagan writers of Greece and Rome abound with evidences, in regular succession, of the existence, character, and death of our Lord, and of his extraordinary mission; and they are to this effect: that at or about the time of his crucifixion, there was a miraculous darkness over different parts of the earth, at noon day, accompanied with an earthquake."—Phlegon, Eusebius, Tertullian, Origin, Bishop Wilson, Dr. McKnight.

"That an account of the character and crucifixion of our Lord was, immediately after that event had happened, rendered to the emperor Tiberius by Pontius Pilate, and that, in consequence, the emperor proposed to the senate that Jesus should be added to the list of the Roman gods."—*Acta Pilati*. Justin Martyr's Ap. 76. Tertullian's Ap. c. 2. p. 22. Grotius. Bishop Pearson. Dr. McKnight. Dr. Lardner.

"That he was born, lived, and promulgated a new religion in Judea, in the reign of Tiberius; that he had many disciples; that he was crucified during the government of Pontius Pilate; that his followers became very numerous in the reign of Nero, and were exposed to dreadful persecutions, and amongst others, to that of being burned in the 'troublesome coat.' (*tunica molesta*.)"—*Annals of Tacitus*, lib. 13–15. "The 'troublesome coat' alluded to by Tacitus, was made like a sack of paper, or coarse linen cloth; and having been first besmeared within and without with pitch, wax, rosin, sulphur, and other combustible materials, or dipped into them, was put upon the person accused; and to keep him upright, so as to encourage the fire, his chin was fastened to a stake fixed in the ground. The testimony of Tacitus, as to this circumstance, is confirmed by Martial, lib. 10, Ep. 25, and by Seneca, Ep. 14. Juvenal Lat. 1. v. 155. 8, 285. Dr. Lardner.

"That there was amongst the Jews a considerable sect, whose leader was Christ, in the reign of Claudius. viz.

within fifty years after our Lord's death; that Christians were punished by Nero from the year 54-68."—Suetonius in Claudio, c. 25. Suet. Nero, c. 16. "That in the reign of Domitian (A. D. 95) the Christians suffered persecution; but that in the reign of Nerva (A. D. 96) the persecution was somewhat abated."—Dion. Cassius. Dr. Lardner. Dr. McKnight.

"That in the reign of the emperor Trajan, which was in the year of the Christian era 107, or within seventy-five years after our Lord's death, the Christians were extremely numerous throughout Pontus, Bithynia, and the whole Roman empire, and that they worshipped Christ as God."—Pliny, lib. 10. 97, 98. "That Christians or Galileans were known as a separate sect in the year 109."—Arrian's discourses of Epictetus, lib. 4, ch. 7.

"That Christianity was an increasing and prevailing religion (particularly in Asia) in the reign of Adrian, who was himself favorable to it, A. D. 117."—Euseb. chron. 167. Justin Martyr. Dr. McKnight. Milner.

"That Christians were numerous in the reign of Titus, Antoninus Pius, A. D. 138."—Dion. Cassius. Xiphilinus. Eusebius. Justin Martyr.

"That the Christians were numerous and well known in the reign of Marcus Antoninus, A. D. 161. That they had undergone severe persecutions, and that their fortitude in martyrdom was such as to be termed obstinacy."—Meditations of Marcus Antoninus, lib. 11, c. 3. Orosius. Mosheim. "That in the year 176 it was a common belief that, *immediately before* the birth of Christ, the Jews had uniformly expected a Messiah, who was to be the universal Judge and Lord of all the earth; that there were then extant, accounts of Jesus Christ, admitted by the enemies of Christianity to have been written by his disciples, which contain the history of his nativity, baptism, preaching, miracles, death and resurrection, and which expressly accorded with the relations of the Evangelists, especially

the genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke, the miraculous conception, the star in the east, &c. together with many passages in the Acts of the Apostles and in the different Epistles, and which are so numerous and so various as effectually to establish the general authenticity of the whole."—Celsus *passim*, as quoted by Origen. See also the dialogue at the end of Lucian's works, called *Philopatri*; see also Lucian de Morte Peregrini, who expressly asserts "that Jesus was crucified in Palestine because he introduced a new religion, and that *he was worshipped by his followers as a God*." To the same period I add the testimony of Ælius Aristides in his orations.

"That Christ was known in the year 180 as having founded a new religion amongst the Jews, and in some connection with that of Moses."—Galen de differentia pulsum.

"That in the reign of Septimus Severus, A. D. 202, the Christians were persecuted as a distinct sect."—Spartian.

"That in the reign of Heliogabalus, A. D. 220, the Christians were well known, and that the emperor proposed to the senate that their religion should be introduced into the public religion of Rome."—Lamprid. Heliog. c. 3. 796.

"That the Christian religion was tolerated in the reign of Alexander Severus, (A. D. 222,) who numbered Christ among the deities, and that several minutiae of that religion, such as the ordination of ministers, &c. were then familiar to the heathen world."—Lamprid. Alex. Sever.

"That in the reign of Maximin, the Thracian, A. D. 255, the persecution against the Christians raged violently."—Salpicius Severus, lib. 2. c. 32.

"That the Gospel of St. John, and especially the first chapter, was known in the year 263."—Amelius. Eusebius. Dr. Lardner.

"That in the reign of Aurelian, A. D. 270, the Christians were known as a religious sect."—Vopiscus, Vita. Aurel.

"That in the year 270, the Christian religion was well

known, and the several books of the New Testament, recognized as containing the doctrines of that religion, corresponding with those we now have, including the genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke.—Porphyry *passim*, as quoted by Jerome and others.”—Jewish Repository, Vol. III. 1815, p. 1.

Pardon me, my dear Benjamin, for detaining you so long with so many testimonies; but I thought it important to prove, not only that there existed such a person as Jesus Christ, but also that he was publicly known, in *person* and in his *followers*, from the day of his death to the present period.

§ 3. I will now proceed to show why the Messiah is called *Jesus*, and why Jesus of *Nazareth*. It is evident, from the writings of the prophets, that *to be called* by such or such a name does not infer that the thing or person so to be called shall be commonly known by that name, as a man is by the name by which he is known and distinguished from other men. It is enough that they shall *be* that which they are called, and that which is foretold shall truly belong to them. Thus it is said, “He that is left in Zion shall be called holy,” i. e. he shall evidently *appear* to be holy. Isa. 4: 34. 60: 14. 62: 4. Jer. 3: 17, &c. Hence the Messiah was described by the Prophets by *different* names; some of which were descriptive of his natures, person, offices, &c. When the Messiah appeared, he was generally known by the name of Jesus. Thus, when the man born blind was asked who opened his eyes, he replied, “a man that is called Jesus,” John, 9: 11. This was typified by the change in the name of Moses’ successor, whose original name was *Oshea*, but was changed into *Yehoshua*, which signifies the Lord shall save. The name Jesus was given and explained by the Angel who announced his conception, saying, “thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall *save* his people from their sins.” Matt. 1: 21. It is descriptive of the great and blessed work for

which he came into our world. It literally signifies a Savior; for he delivers his people from all evil, procures for them all that is good; and maintains the objects of his salvation in a state of security and blessedness for ever. "In the name of Jesus," says a pious writer, "the whole Gospel lieth hid; it is the light, food, and medicine of the soul." Acts, 4 : 12. Phil. 2 : 9, 10.

The next name by which Jesus was frequently called, is *Nazarene*, Jesus of Nazareth; and his disciples are stigmatized as *Nazarites*, or *Nazarenes*. Jesus was called by this name because he was brought up and dwelt at Nazareth, which place was so called because it was surrounded by bushes or *branches*.

§ 4. The enemies of Christianity mightily triumph, and charge the evangelist with manifest falsehood, as citing a passage out of the prophets which is not to be found in them. But this is without a cause. Suppose there were no such passage to be found in the writings of the prophets, that could be no greater objection to the writings of Matthew than when we read in the Old Testament that such and such acts of kings, &c. "are written in the books of the wars of the Lord," whilst we neither have such books nor know any thing about them. Numb. 21 : 14. Observe further, that the evangelist does not say, as it is *written*, but only, as it was *spoken*. These are the words of St. Matthew : "and he dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was *spoken* by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene." ch. 2 : 27. Now the knowledge of what had been spoken on this subject may have come down by tradition, and been well known in the days of the evangelist, like that of Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, as mentioned by the apostle Paul, 2 Tim. 3 : 8; or that Moses, at the giving of the law, exceedingly feared and quaked. Neither of these instances is to be found in the Old Testament, but they were only handed down by tradition, and yet they are facts believed by our people. But that which most ef-

fectually removes all objections, and fully justifies the declaration of the evangelist is, that the prophets did actually *write* and *call* the Messiah a Nazarene. I have already mentioned that the city was called Nazareth, because it was surrounded by many bushes and *branches*. Now it is well known that the prophets frequently call the Messiah *Nezer*, which signifies a *branch*. Isa. 11 : 1. Jer. 23 : 5. Zech. 3 : 8. 6 : 12. All these passages are applied to the Messiah by the Targum, Kimchi, &c. And very remarkable is that prediction in Jer. 31 : 6, "There shall be a day, that the *watchmen* upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto Jehovah our God." The word translated *watchmen*, is, in the original, Nozrim, i. e. Nazarenes, the very word by which the followers of Jesus are called. Acts, 24 : 5. Memorable and much to our present purpose are the words of R. Abarbinel, one of the most renowned of our Rabbins, on this passage : "The prophet," saith he, "by the Holy Ghost foresaw that the Romans would believe in *Jesus of Nazareth*, and therefore would be called *Nazarenes* from him." Now, if the prophets foretold that the followers of the Messiah would be called Nazarenes, then he himself must be called so, from whom they take the denomination. That you, my dear Benjamin, may know experimentally Jesus as a Savior, and be numbered amongst the Nazarenes, is the prayer of your affectionate brother.

Farewell.

Jesus, I love thy charming name,
'Tis music to my ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud
That earth and heav'n might hear.

I'll speak the honors of thy name
With my last lab'ring breath;
And, dying, clasp thee in my arms—
The antidote of death.

Letter II.

JESUS CAME AT THE TIME PREDICTED.

Dear Brother,

I now invite your attention more particularly to the proofs that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah.

§ 1. The first proof arises from his being born at the exact period foretold. The prophecy of our venerable father Jacob, Gen. 49 : 10, has been remarkably fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

§ 2. 1. He answers all the significations of the word Shiloh. He is the Lord as well as the Son of David and Judah; to him belong the kingdoms; all civilized nations have already acknowledged him as their rightful sovereign; to him the wise men presented their gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. He is our peace, who has laid down his life a sacrifice, and bore the weight of punishment which would have crushed the shoulders of angels (though they excel in strength) and sunk the whole creation, and by the merit of his oblation he removed the displeasure of God, and procured his mercy and friendship. He is the Prince of Peace, the most peaceable personage that ever lived, and in his hands the pleasure of the Lord does, and ever shall prosper.

§ 3. 2. Jesus Christ was born before the tribe of Judah ceased, or the lawgiver from between his feet. The tribe of Judah was preserved in a remarkable manner as a distinct tribe, until Jesus Christ was born, and his descent from Judah established. The providence of God watched over this tribe particularly. It was numbered apart in David's time, 1 Sam. 11 : 8. 2 Sam. 24 : 9; and the prophets were very careful of the genealogy of this tribe, even in the times of

the captivity, as appears from Ezra and Nehemiah. But soon after the death of Jesus, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the tribe of Judah was dispersed over the whole earth, and their genealogies confounded and lost. There is now not a family, not even the house of David, that know for certainty or can prove their line of descent. The following judicious observation is from the manuscript of a Mr. Barnet, one of our nation, who lived and died a pious Christian: "The word Shevet, here mentioned in Jacob's prophecy, and commonly translated sceptre, meaning royal dominion, should, in my opinion, be literally understood *the tribe*, as expressed in the 28th verse of this chapter—'these are the tribes.' Judah was not to cease being a tribe, (although ten were removed and carried away,) distinguished and known by its preserved genealogies as such, until Shiloh came; nor till then was the lawgiver to cease from between his feet, for the Sanhedrim were still in Jerusalem when our Savior came; and as these genealogies subsisted only to prove *him*, in his human nature, Son of Abraham, Son of Judah, and Son of David. The tribe, at his coming, was to withdraw from Judah, and unto Shiloh were the nations to be gathered; and this prophecy was literally fulfilled; for the ten tribes were carried away captive, but Judah remained, and remained a tribe distinct from Benjamin and Levi in the days of Jesus, even till the destruction of the second temple. Until the days of Jesus the genealogies of the tribe of Judah, as a known distinct tribe, were preserved; and the Jews themselves allow that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah: but as soon as the Christian church was established, or the aggregation of the people was to Shiloh, then fell down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile. He came, for whom was ordered the distinction of tribes and genealogies, to mark his descent: for him they subsisted; and having finished their design and destination, they exist no more." The last clause of the prediction hath also been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, viz.

§ 4. 3. "To him the gathering of the people shall be." We have already seen that the expectation of the people had been excited to the highest degree, both among Jews and Gentiles, when Jesus was born. In like manner, as soon as He began to preach, the people of all nations, and from all quarters, flocked unto him, Matt. 4: 25. On the day of Pentecost, what a multitude of various nations believed! Acts, 2: 5, 9, 12, 45; 5: 14. Thus Jews and Gentiles became united in Christ, and obedient to his commands. Eph. 2: 14-16, 19. And what an innumerable company out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue, have believed in him since that day! and the blessed time is rapidly approaching, when "all nations shall be blessed in him, and all men shall call him blessed." Most cordially do I join in the sentiment of one of our German divines, who saith, "Blessed be God, he has fulfilled his word, which he had sworn to David. He has said to Christ, the Son of David, 'Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' By the power of his glorious Gospel, Jesus Christ has conquered the nations of the earth; he has established peace among men, and has united both Jews and Gentiles in one body, under himself, the only Shepherd and supreme head. Already is his mighty empire extended to all the quarters of the earth. In every place has he, by his religion, brought some of mankind to adore the true God. From the rising to the setting sun, prayer is made to the Eternal Father and his Son, by whom he made the world. The voices of countless thousands resound, Praise and honor, thanksgiving and glory, be unto Him that is, and was, and is to come! Hallelujah! Praise him, ye heavens! All ye nations of the earth, proclaim the glory of our God!" Seiler's *Erbauungsbuch*.

§ 5. Thus, dear Benjamin, I have briefly shown that this ancient prediction of the patriarch has been literally fulfilled in Jesus. This passage could not fail to involve our nation in an inextricable dilemma, were the Messiah *now* to

be born. For the prophecies do declare, and our nation believe, that the Messiah shall be born of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and of the house and family of David. To ascertain all this, it is necessary that, at the time of his birth, there should yet subsist the distinction of tribe and family so clear as not to admit of so much as a suspicion or shadow of mistake or imposture; for which purpose, not only tribes, but even the genealogies of every tribe and family, should appear upon register. So that, were the Messiah now to be born, where are these undoubted genuine registers, to prove his pedigree and the fulfilling of the prophecies, since those necessary records have been long since lost and extinct? From hence, then, it is most evident that the Messiah is already come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth: his name be blessed for ever. Amen.

§ 6. The prophecies of Haggai and Malachi next invite our attention. In these predictions we have shown that the period of the Messiah's appearance was stated, and several circumstances peculiar to his advent. In Jesus Christ they have received their complete fulfillment. He was born whilst the second temple was yet standing, and visited it frequently. At the age of twelve he was found there, sitting and disputing with the doctors, to their great astonishment. In this temple he wrought many miracles, and taught the people; and here he was acknowledged as the Messiah, the children crying Hosannah to the Son of David. As the glory of God was the glory of Solomon's temple, and as that glory was but a shadow of better things to come, Jesus, who was the substance of those shadows, made the second temple more glorious than the former. It deserves our notice, that, a little before the appearance of Christ there was a great "shaking" in the political world, which was followed by a universal peace; and his death "shook" the ecclesiastical world to its very foundation. Heb. 12: 26, 27. And this may well be said to be "but a little" more, when compared with the first promise of a Messiah. Yarchi and Eben Ezra

understand by the shaking of the heavens, &c. wonders and miracles. And of the miracles of Jesus it is witnessed that such things had never been seen in Israel.

§ 7. But, as the second temple is again mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel, as a characteristic of the coming of Messiah, I shall proceed to show that that prediction also has been fully accomplished in Jesus Christ. This will clearly appear, if we consider what is said concerning the Messiah, and the Prince that should come after him.

§ 8. First: with respect to the Messiah. 1. He is to be anointed. "To anoint the Most Holy." This well agrees with Jesus Christ, who was typified both by the High Priest and the Temple, and was to be anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Our blessed Jesus was perfectly holy, both in nature and life; and being anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, he went about doing good, and healing all manner of diseases, preaching the Gospel to the meek, expiating the sins of his people, and now reigns as God's anointed King, upon his holy hill of Zion. Hence he is called *Meschiach*, in Hebrew, and Christ, in Greek; for both signify anointed, not with material oil, but with the Holy Ghost, without measure.

2. "The Messiah is to be cut off." Thus Jesus was tried, condemned, and adjudged to death, in a judicial way, by men, as well as made a curse by God. But, lest it should be thought that he was cut off for any iniquity that was found in him, it is added, "not for himself." Comp. Isa. 53 : 5, &c. And that Jesus Christ was innocent, will be shown in the description of his character.

3. The effects of the death of the Messiah are such as are ascribed to the death of Jesus, and realized by all them that believe. Jesus Christ, by his doctrine, by his Spirit, by his grace, and by the power of his Gospel, "restrained," and set bounds to the rage of wickedness, rooted out the old idolatry of the world, and turned unnumbered millions of our race unto righteousness. By his death he atoned

for our sins, reconciled us unto God, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.

§ 9. Secondly. As it respects the Prince. We might *first* inquire who is meant by this title? Some suppose that it is the Messiah himself, who is to confirm the covenant of grace by his doctrines and miracles, by his death and resurrection, by the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, as the seals of the New Testament. This covenant he confirmed with, or to many, to Gentiles and Jews; and that by offering up himself a sacrifice once, for all, he put an end to all the Levitical sacrifices. Others think that by the *Nagid*, the prince, a leader or general, with a mighty army, is to be understood. I am inclined to adopt the latter opinion. The word *Havba*, "that shall come," is not in construction with *Am*, "the people," but with *Nagid*, "the prince or leader." The Jewish writers understand by it, Titus Vespasian, the Roman general, with his army. Yarchi and Aben Ezra in loco. Abarbinel and Jacchiades, in Wagenseil. Mantissa De lxx. Hebdom p. 92, 93. History informs us; (see the very learned and judicious work of Mr. Marshall on Chronology, p. 271,) that, just before Jerusalem was besieged, peace was established, or, as it is here expressed, the covenant was confirmed, which continued a few years, "a week," or seven years. In the midst of that period the sacrifices and oblations ceased. (See Josephus De Bel. Jud. Lib. 6, c. 2.) Great desolation followed, or, as the original may be rendered, upon the wings or *battlement*, (i. e. of the temple,) shall be the abominations of the desolator. By this is meant the ensigns of the Roman army, which had the images of their gods and emperors upon them, which they set up in the holy place and sacrificed unto. Nothing could be a greater abomination to our people; and thus the city and sanctuary were to continue in their ruin and desolation until the consummation of God's vengeance, determined by him, should be fully poured out upon the desolate people of our nation; which has been

poured out, and continues to this very day. Now, all this was to come to pass during the last of the seventy weeks. It might naturally have been expected that this last week, or seven years, would have commenced at the death of Christ, at the end of the 69 weeks, or 483 years; but no such events took place until 30 years after. The reason why these judgments were deferred, may be, to display the goodness, patience and long-suffering of God towards our nation, as he did to the old world, when he gave them 120 years' time for repentance, before he brought the flood.

§ 10. The late pious and venerable Dr. Scott, who truly and sincerely loved our nation, closes his exposition of this prediction in the following manner: It is undeniable that Daniel foretold that the Messiah would come within less than five hundred years from a decree granted for rebuilding Jerusalem; he showed that he would be put to death by a legal sentence, (for so the word implies,) and he expressly predicted that, in consequence, Jerusalem and the temple would be desolated, and the nation of the Jews exposed to tremendous punishments, of which no termination is mentioned. Within that time Jesus of Nazareth appeared: he answered in every respect to the description given of him by all the prophets: he was put to death as a deceiver; yet vast multitudes became his disciples, and Christianity gained a permanent establishment. After a time, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed; and the state of the Jews, to this day, is a striking comment on the prediction. How can it then be denied that Daniel spake by divine inspiration? or that Jesus is the promised Messiah? Both these important points might be fully demonstrated by this one prophecy, even if it stood single: how much more, when it is only one star, so to speak, in a resplendent constellation; or one among a vast number of predictions, all of which combine with united evidence to demonstrate the same grand truths."

§ 11. Now, my dear brother, I have, at considerable

length, shown that the Messiah must have come long since, for the tribe of Judah is no longer known by genealogies as a distinct tribe; the sacrifice and oblations have long since ceased, and our holy city and temple have been destroyed; and in spite of the repeated attempts of our people to rebuild the temple,* they have continued, (as it was foretold, Hosea,

* It is a remarkable fact, though not generally known, that our people have several times attempted to rebuild the temple, in the reign of Adrian, of Constantine, and of Julian, but have been prevented. The following account of their last attempt deserves peculiar notice. "Ammianus Marcellinus was a heathen writer, and contemporary and intimate with Julian; and his account is as follows:—Julian, who had been already thrice consul, taking for his colleague Sallust, prefect of the Gauls, entered, for the fourth time, on that high office; and although he was not without a solicitous concern for futurity, considering the various events which this year was likely to produce, he carried on his preparations for the war with the utmost diligence; and still enlarging his views, and being desirous to perpetuate the memory of his reign by some great works, he resolved to rebuild, at a vast expense, the magnificent temple at Jerusalem, which, after a long and obstinate siege, begun by Vespasian, and carried on by Titus, had been, with great difficulty, taken and destroyed. The conduct of this affair was committed by him to Alypius of Antioch, who formerly had been lieutenant in Britain, with orders to forward it as much as possible. When, therefore, Alypius had set himself to the work, with the greatest resolution, and was also assisted by the governor of the province, frightful balls of fire (*metuendi globi flammæ*) broke out near the foundation. And those eruptions being repeated, they rendered the place inaccessible to the workmen, who were scorched and burnt several times before they left off. But the element continuing to repel them, the enterprise was laid aside." Lib. 23, c. 1.

This account is corroborated by our Rabbins, David Gantz and Gedalia. Speaking of Julian, he saith: "This emperor commanded to rebuild the temple with glory and magnificence, and he gave to this aid of his own money. But it was prevented from heaven, that this work was not finished; for the emperor was killed in the Persian war. Zemach David, page 20. And in Shalsheth Hackabula, p. 102, we read: "In the days of Rabbi Chanan and his colleagues, which was about 4349, A. M. the chronicles tell us that there was a great earthquake all over the world, and the great temple which the Jews had built at Jerusalem, by order of Julian the

3 : 4,) for nearly 1800 years, "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." I have also shown that Jesus of Nazareth did appear at the very time predicted, and died, to accomplish the work assigned him; and that soon after his death, the events predicted by Daniel have been literally fulfilled. O that our beloved brethren would at length begin to examine the sacred Scriptures, and believe what is written in the law, and in the prophets, and in the book of Psalms, concerning the Messiah; and I doubt not but the second part of Hosea's prediction would soon be fulfilled, viz. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and shall fear Jehovah and his goodness in the latter days." Merciful Father, hasten it, for thy name's sake. Amen.

Letter III.

THE NATIVITY OF THE MESSIAH.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. In this letter I propose to prove, from a variety of circumstances connected with the nativity of Jesus Christ,

apostate, with very great expense, fell; and the next day great fire-balls came down from heaven, which melted all the iron in the building, and burnt many Jews without number." This remarkable fact is also recorded in Socrat. Hist. Eccl. L. 3. c. 20, and in Sozom, L. 5. c. 22, who appeals to several witnesses then living. And Chrysostom says: "We are all witnesses of this thing." Orat. 2. contr. Jud.

that he is the promised Messiah. This is indeed a subject in some respects most mysterious and incomprehensible. It is "the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh." The child called Immanuel, i. e. God with us, or God in our nature; the *Memra*, or *Word*, made flesh. My object, however, is not to speak of the *mode* of this union of natures, but to prove its necessity and reality.

§ 2. The union of the divine and human nature, in the person of Messiah, was necessary to the accomplishment of the work he had undertaken to perform. As it was necessary that the Mediator should be truly *man*, that he might be capable of subjection to the law, both in its precepts and penalty; so it was equally necessary that he should be truly *God*, in order that his human nature might be able to bear the avenging wrath of the Almighty, and its sufferings be adequate to the intrinsic evil and demerit of sin. Had he been man only, and not God, his obedience and satisfaction could have been only of finite value and worth. Such as the cause is, such must the effect be. But if the humanity he assumed, and in which he satisfied the law, in both its precepts and penalty, subsisted all along in his divine person, then, from the divinity of his person, its services and sufferings must have derived infinite value and worth.

§ 3. That the Messiah was really to unite the two natures in one person, is very evident from the faith of the patriarchs, from the sentiment of the Jews in our Lord's time, from the acknowledgment of modern Rabbins, and from abundant declarations of Scripture. This is indeed boldly denied by Dr. Priestly, in his history of corruptions, vol. 1. p. 1. "The Jews," says he, "were taught by their prophets to expect a Messiah who was to descend from the tribe of Judah; but *none of their prophets* gave them an idea of any other than a *man like themselves*, in that illustrious character; and no other did they ever expect, or do they expect, to this day." This all-important assertion, which changes the Rock of Ages, the foundation of the Christian religion, into

a mere heap of sand, stands altogether without a single proof. If this assertion were confined merely to the benefit and expectation of our people, we might pass it by unnoticed. For, even if it were true that they did not expect more than a mere man, yet it would no more prove that the Messiah was not to be a divine Savior, than their expectation of a mere worldly king and conqueror proves that the Messiah was not *first* to suffer and die, and then enter into his glory. But his assertion affects the testimony of the prophets, as well as the belief and expectation of the Jews. I shall therefore show that the doctor's assertion is not only without proof, but utterly false. He says that "*none of their prophets gave them an idea of any other than a man like themselves.* God willing, I shall show, at large, hereafter, that *all the prophets who spoke of the Messiah, spake of him plainly and explicitly as more than man and angel, yea, as Jehovah.* A few words at present will suffice to show the sentiment of our ancient Rabbins on this subject.

§ 4. With respect to our fathers under the Old Testament. It is evident from sacred Scripture, that all true Israelites, like Abraham, were saved through faith in the promised and future Messiah. But how could they have any ground for faith, as to his sufficiency for their salvation, or how could he be, *without idolatry*, an object of their faith and joy, unless they knew assuredly the all-sufficiency of his person? And how could they then know him, if he were not then existent, or rather pre-existent, and divine? and how could he be divine, but in being Jehovah? And if they had not a knowledge of the personality of Jehovah, how could they possibly think of being reconciled *to Jehovah by Jehovah*; and that through assumption of the woman's seed in order to perform their redemption? They had *no* idea of a *created* God, but of God a creator; no conception of an *inferior* deity, but of a deity *supreme*; nor any notion of an everlasting salvation being accomplished without a goodness and a strength equally infinite and everlasting.

§ 5. With respect to the Jews in our Savior's time, we find that they also expected the Messiah to be more than a *mere man*. What other sense can be put on their declaration, "That when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." John, 7 : 27. This must refer either to his miraculous conception or to his divine nature. This further appears from their confusion and silence to the following question put to them by Jesus Christ: "What think ye of Christ?" (or the Messiah;) "whose son is he? They say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, How then does David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word: neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions." Matt. 22 : 42-46. "Let any man of a plain, common understanding, read this passage, and then determine for himself. Will it not instantly strike him that our blessed Lord meant to infer that something above the nature of a human being was appointed to distinguish the character of a Messiah? that notwithstanding Christ, according to the flesh, was to spring from the seed of David, yet, at the same time, he was to be David's Lord? Nor can there be a doubt that our Savior's argument was considered in this light by his hearers; and that it wrought such conviction upon their mind, is evident from their silence." Hawker's Ser. p. 19.

§ 6. Some of our later Rabbins have acknowledged that God *might* and *would* assume human nature. R. S. Yarchi, Ex. 15, 2, says, "This is my God; he revealed himself in his glory, and they *pointed* at him with their *finger*." Again, in ch. 22 : 2: "I am the Lord thy God," &c. "Because God appeared unto them at the Red Sea like a *warrior*, and at the giving of the law like an *aged man*, full of compassion, it might be supposed there were two Gods; therefore said he, I am that same God." And Rab. Eliezer

said, (Tanith, fol. 31, c. 1,) "The blessed God will in future (or as the word *Athid* is frequently understood in the Talmud, in the days of the Messiah upon earth) make a feast for the righteous, and he will *sit amongst them* in Paradise, and every one of them shall point at him with the finger."

§ 7: The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament abound with proofs of the unity of the divine and human natures in the person of Messiah. "Unto us a child is born," saith the prophet, "unto us a son is given,"—"the mighty God." Isa. 9: 6. Here is his humanity and his divinity. He, who, in respect of his humanity, is a child born, in respect of his divinity, is the mighty God. His natures are two, but, as a person, he is one. Jehovah also testifies; "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous *branch*, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness." Jer. 23: 5, 6. That this prediction belongs to the Messiah we have already seen. Now, in respect of his humanity, he is affirmed to be a *branch* raised up unto David; for, as man, he was of the tribe of Judah, and of the household of David; but, with respect to his divinity, he is called Jehovah. This is the ineffable, the incommunicable name, which is never applied to any living creature besides the Messiah, as will be shown hereafter. Memorable are the words of Zechariah, 13: 7, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and (or rather, *even*) against the man that is my *fellow*, saith the Lord of hosts." The same person is here styled *man*, and *Jehovah's fellow*. Hence, in the New Testament, the apostle Paul, one of the greatest Hebrew scholars and the most expert in all Jewish learning, as well as inspired by the Holy Ghost, speaking of the privileges belonging to the Jewish nation, saith, "whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom.

9 : 5. How full and plain the assertion of the two natures in the one person Christ! *Concerning the flesh*, or in respect of his humanity, he was a descendant of the Jewish fathers, and yet was the supreme God. One of the leading mysteries of godliness is, "God manifested in the *flesh*." 1 Tim. 3 : 16. Another inspired writer informs us, "that the Word which was in the beginning *with* God, and *was* God, was in due time made *flesh*." John, 1 : 1, 14. The divinity of the Messiah will be a distinct subject for our future consideration. I will add no more at present, but proceed to show the fulfillment of various prophecies in his descent, and the circumstances which attended his nativity.

§ 8. First. His descent. Here let us consider the nation, the tribe, the family, and the individual. 1. The nation from whom the Messiah was to descend. The first promise or prophecy of a Messiah, Gen. 3 : 15, left it entirely undetermined as from what particular people or nation he should spring. Had he arisen from any nation or any family among men, it would have been sufficient to have verified that promise; but after the promise and oath were made to Abraham, it was necessary that he should be of his seed. This was also foretold by the prophet, Jer. 30 : 21 : "Their nobles, or rather *Adiro*, *his noble one*, shall be of themselves, and his governor shall proceed out of the midst of them." Though this was the case with all the kings of Israel, for *no stranger* was to sit on the throne of Israel, yet it had a particular reference to the Messiah. The Targum paraphrases it thus : "Their king shall be anointed from among themselves; even *their Messiah* shall be revealed from the midst of them." Kimchi, on the passage, says, "It is very well known that the king Messiah shall be of Israel." It

also applied to the Messiah in the Talmud Sanhed. fol. 982. Nor is it denied by our people, that the Messiah was to be of the seed of Abraham, and that Jesus Christ was of that seed; yea, an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. In this, indeed, lies principally the glory and prefer-

ence of our nation above the heathens or Gentiles, that "of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Rom. 9: 5. And when Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "Salvation is of the Jews," John, 4: 22, he had, no doubt, reference to his descent from Abraham. Hence it is evident that no stranger could be the Messiah; neither Herod, who was an Idumean, nor Vespasian, who was a Roman.

§ 9. 2. That the Messiah was to descend from the tribe of Judah, we have already proved from Gen. 49: 10; and on this account, that tribe had the pre-eminence of the rest: for Judah prevailed above his brethren, because of him the Shiloh, the chief ruler, the Messiah was to come. 1 Chron. 5: 2. And it is evident, as the apostle observes, Heb. 7: 14, "that our Lord sprang out of Judah." Hence he is called, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah." Rev. 5: 5.

3. As the descent of the Messiah was limited to one peculiar nation, and to a particular tribe in that nation, so also a particular family was pointed out, viz. the family of David. This is evident from many passages of sacred Scripture. See Ps. 132: 11. Acts, 2: 30. In Isa. 11: 1, he is promised as the root of Jesse; on which the Targum saith, "A king shall come forth from the sons of Jesse, even the Messiah shall be anointed from his children." Many of our Rabbins acknowledge that this verse, and the 10th verse, are predictions of the Messiah. Sanhed. fol. 93, 2. Aben Ezra, Kimchi and Yarchi, in loco. Nach. Disput. cum. frat. Paulo. p. 53. Zohar. Ex. fol. 71: 1. In our prayer book to this day, he is called "the Son of Jesse." Sepher Tephil. f. 278, 1, and 285, 2. And nothing is more common than for Messiah to be called *Ben David*, "the Son of David." Hence, in the days of our Savior, the ignorant as well as the learned were acquainted with this title; and when our Savior asked, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" they very readily replied, "the son of David." Thus the sick called him the "son of David," and the children cried, "Hosan-

nah to the son of David." For the same reason the Messiah is sometimes called by the prophets by the name of *David*, as in Jer. 30: 9; Ezek. 34: 23, 24; 37: 24, 25; Hosea, 3: 5, and all these passages are applied to the Messiah by our Rabbins. Jer. 30: 9; Ezek. 34: 23; 37: 24, by Kimchi, Hosea, 3: 5, by the Targum; and Ab. Ezra, Ps. 144: 14, by Michlol yophi; and 1 Kings, 11: 39, and Hag. 2: 23, by Abendana. Nat. in Michl. Yophi. That Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, is of the family of David, is abundantly evident. Because Mary, as well as Joseph, belonged to the family of David, therefore they both went to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be taxed. The angel who was sent to announce her conception of the holy child Jesus, declared her to be of the house of David.

§ 10. It is objected that Jesus could not be said to be of David, although Mary his mother be of that family, because it is a common principle that "the family of the mother is not considered a family," i. e. the family is always reckoned from the father's side; be it so, but it is also considered a principle that the offspring is considered the "seed of the man;" but the Messiah was promised emphatically as "the seed of the woman," because he was not to have an *earthly father*, and therefore his descent must necessarily be reckoned from his mother. Nor ought any of *our* people to find fault with the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, though some difficulty should now exist in reconciling them, seeing that the Jews in our Lord's time did not object to them; and certainly they understood them better than we can, after the lapse of 1800 years, and the loss of ancient documents. Besides, if Jesus was not the Messiah, and the true one is yet to come, how will he prove his descent from David? For it is a fact that will not be denied by any *candid and honest Jew*, that there are no genealogies preserved among our people, either in private families or in the synagogue. Should it be said that he will prove his descent by miracles, it is not at all likely that he will show greater miracles, signs and won-

ders, than Jesus did. Further, is it not a fact that our people have intermarried with their proselytes of all nations, and sometimes with others, insomuch that there is not one Jew in the world who can with certainty affirm that *he* is of the pure and unmixed blood of Abraham, the father of the faithful.

§ 11. Notwithstanding all the objections brought by our people against the proofs that Jesus Christ is of the family of David, I appeal to their own Talmud, which you, my dear Benjamin, know, they consider of greater weight and authority, than the Bible itself. In Sanhedrim, c. 6. fol. 43. Ed. Venit. it is said, "that Jesus was hanged on the evening of the passover; that a crier went before him for 40 days, to proclaim, that if any one knew any cause why he should not be put to death, he should declare it; that there was none to be found that could speak on the behalf of Jesus; and that one, whose name was Ulla, gives the reason of this proceeding to be, that Jesus was *related to the kingdom*; which he could not be, except he were *ex semine regio*, i. e. of the Davidical family.

§ 12. Bishop Kidder observes, (part 2d. p. 154,) "I take this to be a very considerable testimony, as it now lies before us in the Talmud; but yet it is in the *printed* copies so delivered, that it gives too great a suspicion that the Jews have, in the *printed Talmud*, used some *fraud and artifice* in this matter, to obscure the tradition. They who have more time and leisure, will bestow it well in a farther search. I have seen a copy of a *M. S.* of Sorbon, written towards the end of the 13th century, in which this matter is related with much greater perspicuity than we find it now in the *printed* copies of the Talmud. For there Ulla, after the account before rehearsed, is brought in, saying expressly, 'Sed hoc factum est de Jesu Nazareno, quia consanguineus erat regno;' and the *Dominican* who gives us that translation, tells us that the same words are to be found in the book called *Moed* in the title *Sabbath*, which now

(though there be still mention made of Jesus) is, in the printed copies, entirely left out." The bishop continues, "I very well know the Jews have been accused of erasing out of the late editions of the Talmud, what was found in the ancient copies to our present purpose. I will not charge them with what I cannot prove, but wish that learned men, who have the opportunity of comparing the several copies, would make it their business to inquire into this matter with great application."

Whilst regard to truth compels me to acknowledge the fact, i. e. that almost every thing relating to the Christian religion, that was in the ancient copies of the Talmud, has been left out in the modern copies, yet the prelate was mistaken to the *motive* and *design*. It was not "*fraud* and *artifice*," but fear of persecution, as will be seen by the following circular, which was sent from a council of elders, convened in Poland, in the year 5,391, A. M.

§ 13. *Great peace be to our beloved brethren of the house of Israel.* Having received information that many Christians have applied themselves with great care to acquire the knowledge of the language in which our books are written, we therefore enjoin you, under the penalty of the great Ban, (to be inflicted upon such of you, as shall transgress this our statute,) that you do not, in any new edition, either of the Mishnah or Gemara, publish any thing relative to Jesus of Nazareth; and that you take especial care not to write any thing concerning him, either good or bad, so that neither ourselves nor our religion may be exposed to any injury; for we know what those men of Belial (Mumrim, or Jews who had embraced Christianity, have done to us, when they became Christians; and how their representations against us have obtained credit. Therefore, let this make you cautious. If you should not pay strict attention to this our letter, but act contrary thereto, and continue to publish our books in the same manner as before, you may occasion, both to us and to yourselves, greater afflictions

than we have hitherto experienced, and be the means of our being compelled to embrace the Christian religion, as we were formerly ; and thus our latter troubles might be worse than the former. For these reasons we command you, that if you publish any new edition of those books, let the places relating to Jesus the Nazarene be left in blank, and fill up the space with a circle like this ○ . But the Rabbins and teachers of children well know how to instruct the youth by word of mouth. Then Christians will no longer have any thing to show against us upon this subject, and we may expect deliverance from the afflictions we have formerly labored under, and reasonably hope to live in peace."

§ 14. I have now shown that the prophecies concerning the nation, the tribe, and the family from whom the Messiah was to descend, have been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth ; but I cannot proceed without observing and admiring the wonderful provision which was made for this purpose in the law of Moses. Our nation was not only divided into several tribes, but each tribe into its several families ; and as every tribe had a distinct inheritance, which obliged them to keep genealogies of their several families, so, to make them more exact and punctual in this, no alienation of inheritance was allowed for longer than the year of jubilee, which returned every fifty years ; and then every one that could clear his pedigree, and make out his right of the inheritance of his ancestors, was to be reinstated in the possession of it : this made it every one's interest to preserve his genealogy : but that which still further contributed to this, and made them still more careful in this matter, was the law of lineal retreats ; i. e. upon failure of an heir in any family, the next of kin was to be heir at law ; which obliged every tribe not only to take care of their own genealogy, but those also of the several families of their kindred ; that, by knowing the several degrees of proximity of blood, they might be able at any time, upon failure of an heir, to make out their title to the inheritance of their fathers

This was the method to be taken throughout their generations; so that when the fullness of time should come for the promised Messiah to appear, he might by this means easily and certainly prove his lineal descent from the seed of Abraham; from the tribe of Judah and the family of David.

§ 15. I shall now point out the individual of whom he was to be born. Not a few of the most ancient and most learned of our Rabbins have acknowledged that the Messiah was to be without having an *earthly father*, and to be born of a virgin. Some express it in one way, and some in another. "The birth of the Messiah alone shall be without any defect." "His birth shall not be like that of other creatures, into the world." "None shall know his father before he tells it." "The birth of the Messiah shall be like the dew from the Lord; as drops upon the grass expects not the labor (action) of men." See Yarchi, Gen. 35 : 8. Moshe Haddarshan, on Gen. 28 : 22. Ps. 85 : 12. Helvic. Elench. p. 40. Tal. Jerusalem Rerash. c. 5. Rabbi Moshe Haddarshan declares his sentiment in these words: "The Redeemer whom I will raise up from among you shall not have a father, according to Zechariah, 6 : 12. 'Behold the man whose name is the *Branch*, and he shall grow up *out of his place*,' i. e. he shall have another principle of generation. So also Isa. 53 : 2. 'And he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.' So also David saith of him, Ps. 110 : 3. 'In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth.' Again it is written, Ps. 2 : 7. 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.'" See Martini Fid. Pug. page 125.

In Bereshith Ketannah the words, Gen. 19 : 32, are thus explained: Rab. Tanchuma has said it is not written a *son*, but *seed, that seed*, viz. who shall come from another place, and that is Messiah. In Ber. Rab. ch. 4, 25, on the words "another seed," the same author saith, in the name of R.

Samuel, "this is that seed which shall arise from another place; and what is that? it is the king Messiah." The same language is ascribed in Medrash, Ruth, 4 : 19, to R. Nechemiah and to R. Jacob, the son of Abin. In Bereshith Rabbah there is a remarkable passage to the same purpose: "R. Joshuah, the son of Levi, has said, come and see that the way of the blessed God is not like that of flesh and blood, i. e. man; for flesh and blood wounds with a knife and heals with a plaster; but the way of the blessed God is not of this nature, for he heals by the very means by which he wounds. It is this that is written, Jer. 30 : 17, 'For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds.' And this shalt thou find in Joseph and in Israel, when he shall heal them by the very means by which he hath wounded them. Did not Israel sin in a virgin? as it is written, Ezek, 23 : 3, 'There they bruised the teats of their virginity.' And they are punished in a virgin; as it is written, Lam. 5 : 11, 'They ravished the women in Zion, and the maids in the cities of Judah.' But he will return and give comfort by a virgin, as it is declared, Jer. 31 : 21, 22, 'Turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.' " R. Hunnah, in the name of Rabbi Idi, and R. Joshuah, the son of Levi, have said, "This is the King Messiah, of whom it is written, Ps. 2 : 7, 'Thou art my Son, &c. And concerning this, Isaiah saith, 'For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.' And it is this that the holy Scripture hath said, Judges, 5 : 8." See also R. Berachia, in Ber. Rab. Gen. 2 : 4.

The Jews, in our Lord's time, had the same notion respecting the generation of the Messiah, viz. that his father should not be known; and on this account they objected to Jesus being the Messiah, supposing that Joseph was his

real father. Thus, when Jesus told them that he was the bread of life, they murmured and said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" John, 6 : 42. Again : "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit, we know this man, whence he is ; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."

§ 16. That the Messiah was to be born of a virgin was promised in Isaiah, ch. 7 : 14 : "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Messiah is the sum and substance of the Scriptures ; still, like the natural sun, so the light of the Sun of Righteousness arose gradually upon the sons of men, and shone brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Some ages had but a very faint and glimmering view ; others enjoyed a clearer and more perfect revelation of his person, offices, &c. The manner in which the first promise was expressed, "the seed of the woman," no doubt contained this mystery, that he was to be without an earthly father, and to be born of a virgin ; yet probably few understood the truth thus taught, but the prophecy under consideration is clear and distinct.

I shall endeavor to prove that by the child promised is meant the Messiah, and that his mother was to be a virgin.

1. Consider the scope and design of this prophecy. This was evidently to comfort the dejected house of David, who were in the utmost confusion at the tidings of the conspiracy formed against them by the kings of Syria and Israel ; upon which Isaiah was sent with a message to Ahaz ; and upon meeting him with his nobles, he bids him ask a sign of the Lord his God, either in the height above or in the depth ; but the king, in a haughty, irreverent, and irreligious manner, rejected it, under a specious pretence of not tempting God ; upon which the prophet turned himself from him to the distressed *house* of *David*, and comforts them with the news of a Messiah's birth, who was to spring from them.

Surely nothing could be more supporting to them under their present fears than this; for hereby they were assured that they should never be destroyed or cut off before the Messiah was born. This was a confirmation of the patriarch's prediction concerning Judah, lately considered, from which it appears that the tribe of Judah must remain until Shiloh, the Messiah, should appear.

2. Consider the manner in which the prophecy was delivered. The birth of this Son is represented as something stupendous and extraordinary, as a sign, prodigy, wonder, or miracle, and therefore introduced by the word *Behold*.

3. Consider, further, the description given of the mother. The Hebrew word *Almah*, signifies a virgin, and no other. This appears to be the constant and universal meaning of the word, in all places of the Old Testament. See Gen. 24 : 43. Exod. 2 : 8. Ps. 68 : 21. Cant. 1 : 3, 6, 8. Nor can Prov. 30 : 19. be made a just objection; for it does not appear that the maid and the adulterous woman are one and the same person. But, even supposing they were one and the same person, yet, as it has been justly observed, (See Gill on the Messiah,) she might, though vitiated, be called a maid or virgin, according to her own profession of herself, or as she appeared to others, who knew her not, or in reference to what she was before she became defiled. Thus we read, Deut. 22 : 28, "if a man lying with a *virgin*," i. e. one who was a virgin before her defilement. Thus we say the house is burned to ashes, i. e. that which was a house is now changed to ashes.

§ 17. Now this prophecy had its literal accomplishment in Jesus of Nazareth, our blessed Savior. The evangelist Matt. 1 : 19, 22, 23, gives us the following account: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise; whereas his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child by the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

But whilst he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." This account was not contradicted, or attempted to be disproved by our people in Christ's time, who were most capable of discovering the fraud or imposture, if there had been any. It is therefore as vain as it is strange for any modern adversary to attempt to disprove the fact, after all the genealogies are lost. Another passage of Scripture which proves the Messiah to be born of a virgin, is that in Jeremiah, 31 : 22. "Jehovah hath created a *new* thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man." The context evidently shows that this is a prophecy of the Messiah. The blessing promised in ver. 10-14, the Jews expected only in his days, and could be had from him only. The slaughter of the children, ver. 15, is applied to the Messiah Jesus. It is said to be a *new* thing, and a *creation*, which is not applicable to the conception of a child in a natural way. The word *Savar*, to *compass*, very fitly expresses the conception of a child, as signifying the cause or occasion of any thing. 1 Sam. 22 : 22. Some of our Rabbins have acknowledged that the Messiah is here intended, and that by the woman, is to be understood a virgin. R. Moshe Haddashan, Gen. 41, in galatine de arcansis c. V. Lib. 7. c. 14. R. Oshua, in Lightfoot's Harm. p. 42. Bere. Rab. Parshah 89, in Pier-son on the creed, Art. 3. See also, page 241.

Now, my dear brother Benjamin, knowing, by personal experience, that the mysterious part of the subject of this

letter is a great stumbling-block to our nation, let me beseech you, most affectionately, to read it over again and again, carefully and prayerfully, with deep humility for divine illumination; and should there be any objections in your mind, let me know them, and I will endeavor, by the help of God, to remove them. And may the Holy Spirit form Christ in your heart, the hope of glory. Amen.

Farewell.

Letter IV.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Dear Brother,

I was much gratified in perusing your last letter. It hath confirmed my hopes that you have paid considerable attention to my former letters. The objections you have brought against the statement of my last letter, are neither new nor unanswerable. They have all been collected and brought against the Christian religion, by R. Isaac in Chizick Emunah, and by R. Lipman in his Carmin, and they have been answered by Wagenseil and others. To some of them I have already alluded in my last letter, and thought once to enter fully on the refutation of them, but was prevented by the exhortation of the apostle to Timothy and Titus, "not to give heed to the vain and endless genealogies." 1 Tim. 1: 4; Titus, 3: 9.

§ 1. The genealogy of Christ is, however, an exception, and you have justly styled it the "turning point of the Messiahship of Jesus." I fully agree with you, that "if

Jesus Christ be not of the family of David, he could not be the Messiah." Hence Christians, though much divided and subdivided in their opinions almost on every subject, are yet agreed that Jesus of Nazareth is of the family of David ; nor has any of our people attempted to disprove it. I think you have very judiciously comprised your objections into a *few*, and this will greatly facilitate my labor in answering them in their order.

§ 2. In the first place, you seem to have taken it for granted that both St. Matthew and St. Luke give us the genealogy of Joseph only. This is a subject much disputed. Many eminent writers are of opinion that St. Matthew hath given us the genealogy of Joseph, and St. Luke that of Mary. I feel, however, much pleasure in being able to agree with you. I am fully persuaded that both the evangelists have given us the genealogy of Joseph ; and I am aware that this opinion is liable to objections, and you have properly stated them. Here you observe that the two evangelists contradict each other ; for St. Matthew saith that the father of Joseph was Jacob, but Luke saith Joseph was the son of Heli ; and you lay it down as a principle, that no man can have two fathers. This is true in one sense, but not in another. By nature there can be but one father, but a man may have several fathers upon different grounds. For example, A. may be said to be the *natural* son of B. and the *legal* son of C. The former is a relation formed by nature, B. having begotten A, and so he is his natural son ; but the latter is a relation arising from a law either human or divine. By human laws, I refer to the laws of adoption and marriage. By the former, the adopted person becomes a son to him that adopted him ; and by the latter, the husband of the wife becomes a son to her father, and the son of a woman by a former husband becomes the son of her present husband. By a divine law, I refer to the law of raising up seed to the name of a dead brother, see Deut. 25 : 5, 6. By this law, the memory of the first-born of a family, who

dead childless, was preserved, and the inheritance kept in a direct line. According to this law, A. may be said to be the son of B. and of C. He is the son of C. by nature or generation, and the son of B. by law, bearing his name, and taking his place in the inheritance. Thus it has been considered that Joseph was the natural son of Jacob, as mentioned by St. Matthew, and the legal son of Heli, mentioned by St. Luke. This mode of reconciling the seeming contradiction of the evangelists seems the most natural, and is of very ancient date. Eusebius gives it as the opinion of Julius Africanus, in the following words: "That the genealogies among the Jews were of descents either natural or legal; the natural are the genuine offspring; the legal were those who take place by virtue of a received law. Thus the natural child of the surviving brother, was reputed the child of the deceased; for there not being among the Jews under the law, any express and clear hope of a resurrection, God thought fit to allow them a symbol of it in that law; whereby the name of the deceased was to be preserved and kept alive. Those names which are inserted in these genealogies, (i. e. Matthew and Luke,) are of two sorts; some the genuine children, who succeeded to their parents; some are such who are legally esteemed and reputed the children of those who did not beget them. So that the evangelists are not inconsistent with each other, when they give in the number of those who were *naturally and legally* the children of different parents, they being the sons of divers parents, either naturally or legally." Eusebius approves of this opinion, and saith that it was given by the kindred of our Savior. Eus. Elf. Hist. l. 1. c. 7.

§ 3. The following extracts from a letter addressed by the Rev. J. Oxlee to J. R. an Israelite, is very much to the point: "I must be permitted to remind you of similar discrepancies to be found in the books of the Old Testament, for which like solutions (viz. as that of Julius Africanus) are offered by the ablest expositors: so that, for the convic-

tion of a Jew, the contradictory accounts of the Evangelists ought to seem sufficiently reconciled, if they can be made to harmonize together on the same principles with those to which they themselves are obliged to have recourse in expounding their own Scriptures.

“In the Old Testament there certainly occur two remarkable contradictions of this sort. In the books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Ezra, Zerubbabel is uniformly styled the son of Salathiel; but in the book of Chronicles he is said to have been the son of Pedaiah, who was either the son or the brother of Salathiel; so that, either way, Zerubbabel could not have been the son, but either the nephew or the grandson of Salathiel. Kimchi asserts that he was the grandson, but called his son, in the same manner that other grandsons are sometimes styled sons, in certain parts of Scripture. Aben Ezra, on the contrary, maintains that he was only his nephew; but called his son, because he had *educated* him and brought him up; a practice, of which the Scriptures, he observes, do furnish many instances.” Mr. Oxlee mentions another palpable contradiction with respect to Hiram, 1 Kings, 7: 14, and 2 Chron. 2: 14, and the methods of Yarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbanel to reconcile it, and then proceeds: “These contradictory statements, together with their solutions, I have brought forward, not with a view of raising a cavil against the Jewish Scriptures, which I believe to have been dictated by the infallible Spirit of God, but for the purpose of reminding you, that whatever objections may be supposed to lie against the truth of the Gospels, from the discrepancies of the text, the same objections will hold good with respect to your own Scriptures; and whatever candor and indulgence may be claimed by you for the due elucidation of such passages as seem repugnant to each other, the same indulgence ought in justice to be extended to the interpretation of the New Testament.” Jewish Repository, vol. 3, 225.

“St. Austin has proposed another method,” saith the

reverend author just mentioned, (*ibi*. 268,) “for adjusting the differences, viz. that Joseph was the son of Jacob and Heli, but of the one by nature, and of the other by adoption; it having been with the Jews a common thing, for those who had been brought up and educated by others than their own parents, to be called their children; and in asserting their pedigrees, to deduce their descent from the registers of those families.” That sonship was acquired by adoption as well as by generation, we have the evidence of the Talmud: Sanhed. Perek 2. Aben Ezra. Hag. 1 : 1. R. Isaac Abarbinel. 2 Sam. 21 : 8. “I affirm,” saith the pious and learned Mr. Oxlee, “that in the genealogy of Joseph, by St. Matthew, the adoptive takes place of the natural order, at least in two instances; that is to say, in Zerubbabel being made the son of Salathiel, who, according to Aben Ezra, was only his uncle; and in Jacob being asserted to have begot Joseph, who seems, indeed, to have been brought up and educated by him, but was doubtless the real and natural son of Heli, as declared by St. Luke. The difference of the two pedigrees, therefore, is to be charged wholly to the account of St. Matthew; who, as the reader may easily perceive, hath contented himself with the vulgar and popular register of the seed royal, as well with respect to that part of the genealogy which falls within the period of the Old Testament, as to that which comes after it. Nor is the veracity of St. Matthew, as a sacred historian, hereby impeached. In making Joseph the son of Jacob, when he was only his son by adoption and education, he followed the practice of the inspired penmen themselves, and of the Jewish church in general; who, as I have demonstrated above, appear to have acknowledged the fitness and propriety of this mode of genealogizing, and especially when an honor might accrue from it to the subject of the pedigree. He affirms, indeed, that Jacob begat Joseph; and so does he affirm, that Salathiel begat Zerobabel, which we know to be literally false. He incurs thereby no more just censure than the writers of

the Old Testament, who have stated in one place, that Michael bare five sons to Adriel; though we are certain, from another testimony of Scripture, that she never had a child at all till the day of her death, that is, saith Isaac Abarbinel, during the whole of her life.

“There are, besides, some other reasons for believing it to be a genealogy of this complexion. The author has preserved the line of Solomon entire, though there is strong ground for suspecting that it had become extinct, even before the termination of the Babylonish captivity. He has curiously divided the genealogy into three distinct periods, and assigned to each of them fourteen generations; to accomplish which he must have passed over several steps of the descent, and omitted the names of the less renowned characters; as it is incredible, that between the commencement of the Babylonish captivity and the birth of Christ, there should not have intervened more than fourteen generations. These and such like considerations, naturally arising from an impartial survey of the narrative itself, move me to conclude that the pedigree here given by St. Matthew was what the author had found preserved in some document or register belonging to the foster-father of Joseph, and which he therefore prefixed to the front of his Gospel, in honor of his birth, as deducing his descent from David, in the line of Solomon.

“But the pedigree given by the evangelist Luke, whether we regard the completion of its numbers or the height of its repetition, has every appearance of being his natural and genuine descent, and exhibits, at this day, the most extraordinary specimen of genealogical composition extant, either in the Scriptures or in any other work. Instead of coinciding with St. Matthew in making Joseph the tenth from Zerubbabel and Shealtiel, he places him the nineteenth; the number of generations interposed bearing a just proportion to the extent of the interval. There is, indeed, fair ground to believe that this evangelist had access to the re-

gisters of some distinguished Jewish families, which have since been lost by their scattered posterity; for on any other supposition than this it must appear wholly incredible that, circumstanced as he was, with the Scriptures before him, he should have either presumed or given himself the trouble to hand down a pedigree of Zerubbabel and Shealtiel so much at variance with the one already recorded in the Chronicles of the Old Testament. It is fully apparent that he regarded Shealtiel as the adopted successor, rather than the natural son of king Jechonias; and Joseph as the foster or adopted, and not the real son of Jacob, in the pretended line of Solomon. To remedy these defects in the other evangelist, was, I make no doubt, the sole design of his inserting this pedigree; and for which there is every reason to presume that he was possessed of documents to furnish him with authority. The two genealogies, therefore, are sufficiently reconciled, on the ground that Joseph was indeed the *foster-son* of Jacob, but the *real* and *natural* son of Heli." Ibid. 294.

§ 4. I will now proceed to consider your next objection, viz. "Seeing that both evangelists give the pedigree of Joseph, and not of Mary; and believing, as Christians do, that Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus, but that he was conceived by the virgin Mary, by the power and energy of the Holy Ghost; we want the pedigree or genealogy of Mary to assure us that she is of the family of David."

1. This objection has been answered by Raymund. des Martins, on the authority of Damascenus, in the following manner: "Levi, who, according to St. Luke, was the great grandfather of Joseph, begat both Matthat and Panter; Panter begat Bar Panter, and Bar Panter begat Joachim, the father of Mary; so that Joseph and Mary were distant relations, being descended, as to the father's side, from one and the same ancestry. Now Mary is affirmed to have been an only daughter; and in order that the paternal estate might not be transferred into any other tribe or family, she

was espoused to Joseph, her remote kinsman, in strict compliance with the custom of the country. *The genealogy of the virgin, therefore, would in a great measure be the same with that of Joseph, and Jesus, her son, must have been the lineal offspring of David the king.*” “That the parents of Mary were Joachim and Anna, and that she was espoused to her kinsman Joseph, in the manner and for the reasons above mentioned, we have the joint authorities of Epiphanius and Damascenus, the one of the fourth and the other of the eighth century, who do not present us with this historical account of the virgin mother as a scheme of their own invention, but as a tradition which they had received from their predecessors in the church, and which, at the time, was known to others equally with themselves.” Ibid. 349. Besides the above tradition, I think it is very evident, both from the Gospel of St. Matthew and St. Luke, that Mary was of the family of David. St. Luke, ch. 1 : 26, 27, inform us that “in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.” “I can see no cause,” saith Bishop Kidder, (Dem. II. 151,) “from the *Greek* text, why we should not connect those words, *of the house of David*, to those, *to a virgin*; and then I would read them with a parenthesis, thus: to a virgin (espoused to a man whose name was Joseph) of the house of David. Here is nothing forced: for certain it is, that the virgin is the subject of the text. It is the message to her that is there related, and she is there *particularly* described.

1. By the place of her habitation; ver. 26, a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.

2. By her relation to Joseph; espoused to a man whose name was Joseph.

3. By her family; of the house of David.

4. By the name by which she was commonly called, Mary.

The mention of Joseph in that place is not upon his own account, but upon the account of the virgin Mary, to whom the angel is directed; and the virgin is so particularly described, that there can be no doubt remaining which was she. That she was a *virgin*, was not enough; because there were, doubtless, many virgins in Nazareth. That her name was Mary, was not sufficient, for there might be several of that name; but add to this, that she was of the *house of David*, and espoused to Joseph, and all doubt is removed out of the way. Hence there was no necessity of the genealogy of Mary; for, in giving the genealogy of Joseph, the genealogy of Mary is included. Thus Abraham married Sarah, his brother's daughter: he that gives an account of the ancestors of Abraham, must be allowed to give an account of the ancestors of Sarah at the same time."

2. Zacharias the priest, who, by the Holy Ghost, prophesied, said that God raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David. Luke, 1 : 69.

3. When Augustus Cæsar commanded "that all the world should be taxed, Mary, as well as Joseph, went to Bethlehem, the city of David. Now, if Mary had not been of the family and house of David, it is not likely that she would then, in her peculiar situation, have accompanied Joseph. Luke, 2 : 3-5.

§ 5. Your next objection is against the miraculous conception of Christ, which, you say, has no other foundation than the story of the angel, and is too mysterious to be believed. Allow me, dear Benjamin, to show that you are mistaken with respect to the first, and unreasonable with respect to the second part of your objection.

You assert that the miraculous conception of Christ rests on the mere story of the angel. Herein you are mistaken. I have already shown, in my last letter, that it was predicted that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, and that our ancient Rabbins expected the Messiah to be without an *earthly* father. Both the evangelists, Matthew and Luke,

refer the birth of Christ to some other energy or cause than the paternity of Joseph. "St. Matthew, whose uniformity of phrase in connecting the links of the pedigree, continues uninterrupted till he arrives at Jesus, there suddenly stops short, and instead of subjoining 'and Joseph begat Jesus,' in the same manner as he had said before, 'and Jacob begat Joseph,' changes his style and saith, 'the husband of Mary, of whom was born Christ;,' and St. Luke, saying of Jesus, 'being, as was supposed, the Son of Joseph,' and the expression, as was supposed, though in a parenthesis in the English translation, is of equal authority with any part of the Gospel, it being found, without any variation, as far as I can trace it, in all the Greek MSS. ancient as well as modern; in all the old versions, and especially in the Syriac, which, according to the most probable computation, must have been made as early as the first century, and therefore of considerable weight in establishing the true reading, either of this, or of any other passage." Jewish Rep. Vol. III. 297.

§ 6. With respect to the second part of your objection, that the miraculous conception of Christ is so mysterious or unparalleled that you cannot believe it; I fully agree that it is mysterious and unparalleled, and therefore it was foretold as a *new creation*, Jer. 31 : 22; but it is unreasonable to reject it on that account. The same almighty power which could form Adam out of the dust, and Eve out of a rib, could, with equal ease, form the Messiah in the womb of a virgin. I shall once more borrow the words of the reverend author mentioned above. In his sixth letter to the Israelite, he saith, "That Christ should have been thus miraculously born, so far from redounding to the prejudice of Christianity, is one of the strongest arguments in favor of its truth; if truth is to be collected from the narratives of the Old Testament. For what, I pray, forms so striking a feature in the history of the most distinguished characters of holy writ as the sterility of the womb from which they were ge-

nerated, and the interposition of Omnipotence to effect their formation. Did not the Almighty, to produce the birth of Samuel, as well as that of Samson, first remove the barrenness of the mothers; that is, to take the words of the sacred penmen in the most qualified sense, that natural inaptitude under which they labored, of bearing children in any manner; and which could be remedied only by a suppletion of those organs and powers on which fecundity depends? Certainly, both these were instances of generation being at least promoted, if not effected, in a supernatural way. But not to dwell on the foregoing and similar occurrences, what shall we say to the birth of Isaac? Sarah, when visited by the hand of the ever-gracious Jehovah, was ninety years old, and had never born a child during her life, and with whom it had now ceased to be after the manner of women, an infallible criterion of her natural inability to sustain conception; and yet, marvellous to relate, she brought forth Isaac, that immaculate and highly favored patriarch, who, in many circumstances of his life, no less than in that of his birth, was a typical representation of the predicted Messiah. That the conception of Isaac by Sarah was wholly miraculous, and required as extraordinary an effort of power to accomplish it, as the birth of Christ, narrated by the evangelists, is not to be denied." Mr. Oxlee, after showing that the Rabbins consider that both Sarah's youth and her virginity were restored to her by God at that time, to enable her to do what Jehovah had promised, he saith, "Now, if, to show the exuberancy of his grace, and to confer upon the patriarch the gift of a son in the decline of life, the Lord was pleased to work a miracle in the visitation of Sarah, and to effect, in the sight of the whole world, a change, which, without the creative aid of Omnipotence, must have been physically impossible; what ground can you lawfully state for objecting to the miraculous conception of Christ, seeing that the birth of the Messiah must have been an event of greater magnitude and importance, in proportion as his dig-

nity and character were regarded as superior to those of that patriarch? The narrative of the one is as much entitled to credit and respect as that of the other; and whoever refuses not to admit the marvellous circumstances attendant on the conception of Isaac, will act a most uncandid part in rejecting the doctrines of the miraculous conception of Christ, as an incredible and impossible story." Jewish Rep. vol. 3: 354.

Now, my dear Benjamin, I pray God to accompany this letter with his peculiar blessing to remove your objections, and I hope the importance of the subject will be a sufficient apology for its length.

Farewell.

Letter V.

PREDICTIONS OF SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THE BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH, FULFILLED IN JESUS OF NAZARETH.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. As the coming or advent of the Messiah in general, so his birth in particular, has been the subject of many predictions. Several circumstances are mentioned in the law, in the prophets, and in the book of Psalms concerning it. 1. The *place* of his *birth* was pointed out by Micah, 5: 2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

That this prophecy relates to the birth of the Messiah, is evident, 1. from the scope and connexion of the text ; which was to comfort and support the people of Israel under the severe judgment announced in verse the first. The birth of Messiah is announced, the true source of joy, comfort and support. Hence one of the names given to the Messiah by our Rabbins is *Menachem*, i. e. "he shall comfort."

2. From the character given of him in the text. Messiah is frequently called a Prince, Ruler and Governor, and he is the Eternal Jehovah, (as shall be proved hereafter.) Indeed, no words can more forcibly express the pre-existence of the Messiah from eternity, than those used in the text. "The words do naturally import an original, distinct from the birth of Christ, which is here declared to have been from eternity, for so the word *Mickedem*, translated here 'from of old,' but rendered *from everlasting*, Hab. 1 : 12, and the expression *Meolamim*, rendered 'from the days of eternity,' do plainly signify." Lowth. Yarchi applies it to the Messiah, and explains it by Ps. 72 : 17. "Before the sun was, his name was *Yinon*," i. e. "a Son."

That this is a promise of the Messiah, is acknowledged by the Targums and other Jewish writers. Targum Jonathan on Gen. 35 : 21, and on Micah, 4 : 8. Yarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi in loco. Abendana in Michlol yophi in loco. R. Isaac in Chizuck Emunah, p. 1, c. 33. Told. Yeshu, p. 1, 7. The Jews in our Lord's time applied it to the Messiah ; for when the wise men came to Herod, and inquired where the new born King of Israel was to be found, he sent for the chief priests and scribes, and demanded of them where Christ should be born ; to which they very readily replied, "In Bethlehem of Judea ;" and to prove the truth of their assertion, they cited this very prophecy of Micah. See Matt. 2 : 5, 6. The evangelist hath been charged with misquoting the passage of the Old Testament, but the difference is so trifling that it scarcely deserves notice ; and if the difference were material and important, no blame could

be attached to the evangelist, who acted merely the part of a faithful historian, and related the answer just as given by the priests and scribes. If there be a mistake, error, or corruption, the blame falls on the priests and scribes.

That Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem, is a fact which has never been denied, and wants therefore no proof. The circumstance, however, which caused him to be born there is too remarkable to be overlooked. Mary lived at Nazareth, and there the holy child was conceived, and would, no doubt, have been born there, but the Scripture cannot be broken. Augustus made a decree for the enrolling or taking the names of his subjects and tributaries, upon which account Joseph and Mary removed from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a town of their own tribe, and family of David, and there was Mary delivered of her first-born, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Luke, 2 : 1, 7. It is remarkable that Augustus had made this decree 27 years before, and was already proclaimed in *Tarracon*, a city in *Spain* ; but, because disturbances broke out, it was not carried into effect. Surely this was the Lord's doing.

§ 2. The second prediction, respecting the birth of Messiah, is the divine worship which was to be paid him by the angels. That the Messiah was to be worshipped by angels, we are informed by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, ch. 1 : 6. Amongst the arguments used by him to show the superiority of Jesus over the angels, he saith, "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." The manner in which the apostle introduces this sentiment, and the proof of it, show that both were well known to the Hebrews. The passage in the Old Testament to which the apostle alludes, is generally supposed to be Ps. 97 : 7, "Worship him, all ye Gods." The object to be worshipped is repeatedly called *Jehovah* in the preceding verses, and distinguished from the idols. It is very evident that this Psalm is a part and continuation of the preceding one, the

title of which is "A New Song;" and Yarchi observes that it is to be referred to the world to come, i. e. the time of the kingdom of Messiah. Kimchi also affirms "that this Psalm, and that which follows, respect the time when the people shall be delivered from the captivity out of all nations," i. e. the time of the Messiah. The Targum also calls the next Psalm "a prophecy of the kingdom and reign of the Messiah." It further appears, from the matter of this Psalm, that it speaks of the kingdom of Messiah; a kingdom wherein God would reign, who should destroy idolatry and false worship; a kingdom wherein the isles of the Gentiles should rejoice, being called to an interest therein; a kingdom that was to be preached, proclaimed, declared unto the increase of light and holiness in the world, with the manifestation of the glory of God unto the ends of the earth. This prediction was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who was worshipped by the multitudes of angels, "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke, 2: 13, 14. Other instances might be mentioned when Jesus Christ was worshipped by angels, which must be considered in a future letter. I therefore pass on to the third prediction, viz.

§ 3. That a remarkable star should appear. This prediction was delivered by Balaam, Numb. 24: 17: "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." That this is a prediction of the Messiah is acknowledged by Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and Aben Ezra saith that many (i. e. Rabbins) expound it of the Messiah. Zohar Ex. fol. 4, 1. Numb. fol. 85, 4. 86, 1. Pesickta in Ketorath Hassamim Numb. fol. 28, 1. R. Isaac in Chizuk Emuna, p. 71, 72. Abendana in Not. Michlol yophi in loco. Our people still expect the appearance of a star at the coming of Messiah. Zohar. Ex. f. 3: 3, 4. Numb. 85: 4. 86: 1. Hence we read of one whose name was *Bar Cochvah*, i. e. the Son of a star, who gave

himself out for the Messiah, and had many followers; but, after his death, not rising again from the dead, they became convinced that he had been a deceiver, and therefore called him *Bar Cosivah*, i. e. the *son of a lie*. Abulpharagius, an Arabic writer, tells us that Zoroastres, who lived four or five hundred years before Christ, instructed his magicians of the coming of Messiah, and that at his birth there should appear a wonderful star, which would shine by day as well as by night; and therefore left it on command with them, that when that star appeared they should follow its direction, and go to the place where he was to be born, and there offer gifts and pay their adorations to him. *Histor. Dynast.* p. 54. Now this Zoroaster appears to have been a Jew, both by birth and religion, and servant to one of the prophets of Israel, and well versed in the sacred writings, and therefore may well be supposed to have learned all this from the prophecy of Balaam. *Prideaux's con.* part I, B. 4, p. 299, 329. All this was remarkably fulfilled in Jesus Christ. At his birth an unusual star appeared, which led the magi, or wise men, from the East to Bethlehem, where they found the holy child Jesus, "and they fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." *Matt.* 2: 1-11: and thus another Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, "the kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." *Ps.* 72: 10. This leads me to notice two other circumstances, which, though perhaps not directly prophecies, yet may be said to be fulfilled in Jesus.

§ 4. The first is the slaying of the children at Bethlehem, which the Evangelist Matthew thus describes: "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceedingly wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men:

then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." The truth of this cruel and barbarous transaction is acknowledged in Toldoth Yeshu. The passage referred to is in Jer. 31 : 15-17.

§ 5. The other circumstance is the remarkable preservation of the Messiah. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver his saints." Joseph being directed in a dream, fled into Egypt, and there remained till the death of Herod, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, out of Egypt have I called my Son." No doubt the evangelist refers to Hosea, 11 : 1, which had its *first* accomplishment in Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and *secondary*, in Christ the antitype, called Israel, Isa. 49 : 3. Our brethren ought not to think it strange, much less to find fault with the evangelist for applying this passage to the Messiah; for this was the common practice of our ancient Rabbins. Thus, when Jehovah saith of our nation, "Israel is my son, even my first-born," it is applied to the Messiah in Mid. Tehillim Rabb. on Ps. 2. "the actions of the *Messiah* are related in the *law*, in the *prophets*, and in the books called *Hagiography*: in the law, Ex. 4 : 22, 'Israel is my first-born;' in the prophets, Isa. 52 : 13, 'Behold, my servant shall deal prudently;' in the Psalms, as it is written, Ps. 110 : 1, 'the Lord said unto my lord.'" On their return, Joseph, finding that Archelaus reigned in the stead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go to Judea; and being warned of God, they went into Galilee, and dwelt at Nazareth; by which was fulfilled what was said by the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene," Matt. 2 : 22, 23. A vindication of this last passage I have given already, in a preceding letter. From the predictions fulfilled in several circumstances connected with the birth of the Messiah, we shall proceed to those relative

to his character. May Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel, who was worshipped by the angels from heaven, and the wise men from the East, prepare you, my beloved Benjamin, to worship him here on earth, and to join hereafter in the worship of all the redeemed in glory. Amen.

Farewell.

Letter VI.

THE CHARACTER OF THE MESSIAH.

Dear Brother Benjamin,

§ 1. Humbly relying on the aid of the Holy Spirit, I propose, in this letter, to show that the prophetical description of the character of the Messiah has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. By selecting the description given by Isaiah and Zechariah, we shall have an epitome of the whole. It has already been shown that the 11th chapter of Isaiah is applied by our Rabbins to the Messiah. His manifold endowments and qualifications for the work which he had undertaken, are thus expressed, verse 2-5: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." The various expressions here used de-

note the manifold endowments of the human nature of the Messiah. They comprise every kind of divine knowledge and sagacity, of wisdom and prudence, of piety and boldness, of holy affections and spiritual relish for heavenly things, of vigor and strength of mind for obedience; and suffering with unabated courage, zeal and patience. So perfect would be his knowledge, wisdom and justice, that he would in no case judge by appearances or report; but would distinguish characters and decide causes with the most exact discernment and impartiality.

§ 2. A similar description of the Messiah's character, as it regards his righteous principles, his benevolence to the poor, and his faithfulness to his people, we have in the 72d Psalm, and in Isaiah the 53d, both of which passages I pass by at present, and mention the description given of him by the prophet Zechariah, ch. 9, ver. 9. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

§ 3. That the Jews, in Christ's time, believed that this prophecy relates to the Messiah, is evident: for when our Lord applied it to himself, by entering into Jerusalem upon an ass, it so affected the multitude, that they spread their garments and palm branches in the way: nay, his disciples took occasion from this sight, to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, whilst the multitude exclaimed: "Hosanna unto the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matt. 21: 4, 5. John, 12: 14, 15. Perhaps no passage of Scripture is more frequently applied to the Messiah by our wise men in general, than that now before us. Rabbi Solomon Jarchi saith: it is impossible to apply it to any one else than to King Messiah. In Pirke Eliezer, chap. 31, it is said that the ass which Abraham saddled, Gen. 22, was created on the eve of the Sabbath; and that Moses rode upon the same ass when he came into Egypt; and that the Son of David, i. e. the Messiah, should

ride upon the same, as it is written, Zech. 9 : 9, Behold, thy king, &c. See also Berash. Rab. Gen. 49 : 11. Yarchi and Kimchi in loco. Saadiah Gaon in Dan. 7 : 14. Zohar. Gen. fol. 127, 3. Sanhed. fol. 96, 1. 99, 1.

§ 4. This prediction has been literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Was the Messiah to be a king ; so is Jesus, as will be seen hereafter. He is invested with regal powers and prerogatives ; a sovereign prince and absolute monarch, having all power both in heaven and on earth. He is Zion's king, Ps. 2 : 7. There his glory, as of a king, shines ; thence his law went forth of old ; and his spiritual kingdom is still administered in his church ; by him its ordinances are instituted, its officers are commissioned ; its subjects protected, and its enemies conquered. Was the Messiah to be just or righteous ; so was Jesus Christ. He was just and righteous in all his actions, both towards God and man. He rendered to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Malice itself could not deny this fact. His enemies were not able to procure two witnesses to prove any thing against him. The judge that condemned him, declared that he found nothing in him worthy of death. " Having salvation." Jesus of Nazareth answers the description. His very name signifies to save. He is become the author of salvation to all them that obey him. As a prophet, he grants salvation from ignorance and error, by leading us into the knowledge of the glory of God. As a priest, he brings salvation from condemnation and misery, by making our peace with God, and assuring us of his favor and immutable love. And as a king, he bestows salvation from rebellion and slavery, subduing our iniquities, and bringing every thought into voluntary subjection to himself ; setting us free from the tyranny of sin, defending us from the power of Satan, and making us more than conquerors over our spiritual enemies, and finally conforming us to the will and image of God.

Messiah was to be *lowly*, or *poor*. In either sense, the de-

scription is applicable to Jesus Christ. His meekness and lowliness of mind are unparalleled. Well might he say, "learn of me." His whole life was a display of meekness and condescension. It appears in his assumption of our nature; in his courteous and affable carriage to persons far inferior to him, even publicans and sinners, and in his ministering to his own disciples, especially in washing their feet. He was poor also—yes, never was there poverty like unto his. Nor was he ashamed to own it. When a certain scribe said he would follow him, Jesus replied, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." In another man's stable he was born, to another man's tree he was nailed, and in another man's sepulcher he was buried. O how condescending and how kind was God's eternal Son! O the riches of his grace, that "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich!"

Another description given of the Messiah is, that he should "ride upon an ass." That Jesus entered Jerusalem in such a manner, is narrated by the evangelists, and frequently mentioned by the Rabbins. This is generally considered, by commentators, as an act of condescension and humiliation, but erroneously. However low, mean, and despicable it might *now* appear, to see a great personage riding upon an ass, it was not so of old. Governors, patriarchs, princes, and judges used to ride on asses before the introduction and multiplication of horses in Solomon's time, which were forbidden by the law of God. It became him to fulfill all righteousness. Whilst entering Jerusalem as King of Zion, the Son of David, and King of Israel, it was very suitable that he should strictly observe the law given to the kings of Israel, and ride in such a manner as they formerly did. We notice once more, "that he was to speak peace to the heathen." This was the great design for which Jesus Christ came into the world. He has made peace by the blood of

his cross; and by the preaching of the Gospel of peace, wars have been checked, and peace made between Jews and Gentiles, and between man and man.

§ 5. To any one who attends to the Gospel history, it must appear that humility and self-denial, zeal for God's glory and compassion to souls, usefulness to all and disinterested goodness, contempt of this world and heavenly-mindedness, patience under sufferings and resignation to the will of God in all things, eminently shone forth in Christ Jesus, our blessed Lord and Savior; that he redeemed his time, improved all opportunities for service, sought the honor of God in all his actions, fervently prayed to him in all difficulties, trusted in him in all dangers, counted no service, no suffering too hard to which he called him, and was obedient even unto death. My dear brother, I feel I have undertaken a task infinitely above my power to perform. The character, temper, and disposition of Jesus far exceed the prophetic description. It was in every respect perfect, without spot, and without blemish. The pious Bishop Newcome, speaking of the character of Christ, says, "He set an example of the most perfect piety to God, and of the most extensive benevolence, the most tender compassion to men. He does not merely exhibit a life of strict justice, but of overflowing benignity. His temperance has not the dark shades of austerity; his meekness does not degenerate into apathy; his humility is signal, amidst a splendor of qualities more than human; his fortitude is eminent and exemplary in enduring the most formidable external evils, and the sharpest actual sufferings. His patience is invincible; his resignation entire and absolute. Truth and sincerity shine throughout his whole conduct. Though of heavenly descent, he shows obedience and affection to his earthly parents: he approves, loves, and attaches himself to amiable qualities in the human race; he respects authority, religious and civil; and he evidences regard for his country, by promoting its most essential good in a painful ministry dedicated to its service,

by deploring its calamities, and by laying down his life for its benefit. Every one of his eminent virtues is regulated by consummate prudence; and he both wins the love of his friends, and extorts the approbation and wonder of his enemies. Never was a character at the same time so commanding and natural, so resplendent and pleasing, so amiable and venerable. There is a peculiar contrast in it between an awful greatness, dignity, and majesty, and the most conciliating loveliness, tenderness, and softness. He now converses with prophets, lawgivers, and angels, and the next instant he meekly endures the dullness of his disciples and the blasphemies and rage of the multitude. He now calls himself greater than Solomon; one who can command legions of angels; the giver of life to whomsoever he pleases; the Son of God, who shall sit on his glorious throne to judge the world. At other times we find him embracing young children; not lifting up his voice in the streets, not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax; calling his disciples not servants, but friends and brethren, and comforting them with an exuberant and parental affection. Let us pause an instant, and fill our minds with the idea of one who knew all things, heavenly and earthly; searched and laid open the inmost recesses of the heart, rectified every prejudice, and removed every mistake of a moral and religious kind; by a word exercised a sovereignty over all nature, penetrated the hidden events of futurity, gave promises of admission into a happy immortality, had the keys of life and death, claimed a union with the Father; and yet was pious, mild, gentle, humble, affable, social, benevolent, friendly, and affectionate. Such a character is fairer than the morning star. Each separate virtue is made stronger by opposition and contrast; and the union of so many virtues forms a brightness which fitly represents the glory of that God who inhabiteth light inaccessible." Notwithstanding the imperfect description I have given of the character of Jesus Christ, I earnestly pray that the Lord

may give me and you, my dear Benjamin, grace to imitate his example; and may "the same mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." To him be glory for ever. Amen. Farewell.

Letter VII.

MESSIAH'S CREDENTIALS.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. I have already shown numerous predictions concerning the Messiah to have received their literal fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth, blessed be his holy name; I will now point out those prophecies which relate to the credentials which were to confirm the authority of his mission. As it was necessary that the Messiah should be divinely appointed, as has been shown before, so it was equally necessary, to encourage our confidence and trust in him, that, on his coming into our world, his mission should be established upon undeniable evidence. And it gives me unspeakable pleasure to be able to state, without fear of contradiction, that the mission of Jesus is confirmed by credentials infinitely surpassing every other embassy. This will evidently appear, if we consider the peculiar and su-

perior unction which he received; the declaration of heaven—the testimony of John the Baptist—and the miracles which he wrought.

§ 2. We commence with the first, viz. the peculiar and superior unction which Jesus Christ received. It has already been stated that the Father had engaged to qualify the human nature of the Mediator by anointing it with the Holy Ghost: hence one of the names of the Mediator is *Messiah*, or *Meshiach*, in Hebrew, and *Christ*, or *Christos*, in Greek, both signifying “the anointed.” The first time that this word was used in the Bible, was by *Hannah* in her prayer: “the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his *anointed*,” or “*Messiah*,” 1 Sam. 2 : 10. R. D. Kimchi ingenuously acknowledges that the king mentioned here is the Messiah, of whom Hannah spake, either by prophecy or tradition. It is generally supposed that *Jesus* is the proper name of the Mediator, but *Christ* refers to his offices. By the *former*, our blessed Redeemer was always acknowledged by our nation; but they deny him to be the *Christ*; and the law which they made in his time is still in force, viz. “that if any man confessed that Jesus is *the Christ*, he should be cast out of the synagogue.”

§ 3. Now the name of Christ, or Messiah, is manifestly borrowed from the ancient divine institution of setting persons apart to an office by the ceremony of anointing. Kings and priests were always anointed, and prophets sometimes, but not always. But all these unctions were only types of that of the Messiah, who was to be anointed as prophet, priest and king. The royal psalmist informs us that “*Messiah* should be anointed above his fellows,” Ps. 45 : 8, i. e. above those, who possessed with him a fellowship or similarity of office, as types of himself. *Aaron* was anointed *high priest*; *Saul* was anointed *king*; *Elisha* was anointed *prophet*; *Melchizedeck* was a *king* and *priest*; *Moses* *priest* and *prophet*; *David*, *king* and *prophet*, yet none was

ever anointed to the *union* and comprehension of all these offices together, except the Messiah.

§ 4. And as the priests and kings of old were set apart to their offices and dignities by a certain oil prescribed in the law of Moses, Ex. 30, so was the Messiah to be anointed with a better anointing, (of which the oil was but a shadow,) namely, with the Holy Ghost; see Isa. 11: 1-3; 61: 1-3; which was not only to designate and set him apart to these great and important offices, but was likewise to *qualify* him, in his human nature, for the performance of them. All this was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, our Savior; for "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." Acts, 10: 38. Although he was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, yet, when entering his public ministry, he was publicly anointed, as a declaration of his election to the work. Thus Aaron and David, two eminent types of the Messiah, were twice anointed. Exod. 28: 41; 29: 31; Lev. 8: 12-30. See Abarbanel on Ex. 28: 21; respecting David, see 1 Sam. 16: 13; 2 Sam. 2: 4. It is remarkable, that, immediately after the baptism of Jesus, it is said, that "being *full of the Holy Ghost*," he "returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil." From thence Jesus returned in the *power* of the Spirit into Galilee; and from thence he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read, and there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath *anointed* me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; and he closed the book, and he gave it again unto the minister, and sat down. And

the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, *this day is this Scripture fulfilled unto your ears.*" Luke, 4 : 1, 14-21, compare Isaiah, 61 : 1-3. That this passage in Isaiah refers to the Messiah, is acknowledged by many of our ancient Rabbins, Kimchi in Sepher Shorashim, Rad. Mashach. R. Sol. Hamelech in Michlol Yophi in loco, and Iuchasin, fol. 69, 1. R. Saadiah Gaon, in lib. Haemun, c. 8. Now when Jesus said, "this day is this scripture fulfilled," it was as much as if he had said, "I am the person here spoken of; and at this present time the Spirit of God is upon me; I am anointed with the Holy Ghost, and now preach glad tidings to you, and all the good things here mentioned, and for the several ends proposed; and this scripture has its full accomplishment," &c. &c.

§ 5. Another evidence of the divine appointment of Jesus as the Messiah and Mediator, is a declaration from heaven, delivered on two different occasions. First, at his baptism, which is thus narrated : "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3 : 16, 17. Here is the testimony of the Father, of the near relation Jesus stood to him, and of the Father's approbation of his work.

The second declaration from heaven was, when Jesus was on Mount Tabor, in the presence of Peter, James, and John, and Moses and Elijah, "there came a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Matt. 17 : 5 : here is an additional sentence, "hear ye him;" assuring the disciples that Jesus is that prophet "like unto Moses," whom all men, Gentiles as well as Jews, are commanded to hear and obey, at the peril of their destruction. Deut. 18 : 18.

§ 6. A third evidence of the divine mission of Jesus, is the testimony of John the Baptist.

Dear Benjamin, allow me to detain you for a few moments on this part of the subject. You know that nothing is more common amongst our people than to talk about *Elijah Hannavoh*, i. e. Elijah the prophet. To present this subject to your view in a clear light, I will show,

I. That the Messiah was to have an harbinger; this will appear,

§ 7. 1. From express prophecies. The first is in Isa. ch. 40 : 3-5. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God; every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." The next is in Malachi : "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." ch. 3 : 1. Again, ch. 4 : 5, 6. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

§ 8. 2. It appears, from the testimony of many of our ancient writers, that the Messiah was to have an harbinger. In Berashith Rabb. fol. 219. § 15. and in Talmud Eruvim, f. 43, 2, it is written: "Before the Son of David cometh, Elijah will come, to publish glad tidings." Maimonides in hilchoth Melachim, c. 2, § 12, saith: "Our wise men, of blessed memory, say, that before the coming of Messiah, Elijah will come." The Targums often speak of Elijah and the Messiah together. See Ex. 40 : 10. Deut. 30 : 4. Lam. 4 : 22. Seder Tephiloth, f. 56, 2. 128, 2, and frequently in Haggodo Shel Pesech. In Pesikta

Rabbetha, fol. 62, c. 1, and in Yalkut Shimoni on Isaiah, fol. 53, c. 3. No. 337, there is a long account of the coming of Elijah *three days* before the Messiah, and of his going out and standing upon the mountains of Israel, repeating the words of Isaiah, 52 : 7 ; “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth !” and that his voice is so loud as to be heard from one part of the world to the other.

§ 9. 3. The same thing appears from the question put to John the Baptist by the messengers sent by the Jews, whether he was Elijah, John, 1 : 21, which sheweth that they expected the coming of Elijah.

I will now show that John the Baptist was the promised harbinger. This will appear,

§ 10. I. From the testimony of those who could not be mistaken. 1. The angel Gabriel foretold it, Luke, 1 : 16, 17 ; “Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God ; and he shall go before him *in the spirit and power* of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

2. His father, Zechariah, by the spirit of prophecy declared it, Luke, 1 : 76, 77. “And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest ; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways ; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins.”

3. John himself, whilst he said, “I am not Elijah,” to rectify the mistaken notion that Elijah *personally* would appear, at the same time asserted that he was the person promised by the *name and character* of Elijah, to do the work of a harbinger. John, 1 : 23.

4. The evangelists have recorded it. Matt. 3 : 1–3 : “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye : for the kingdom of

heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey." Almost the same account we have in Mark, 1 : 1-7, and Luke, 3 : 1-6.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ himself hath twice testified it. When the messengers sent by John the Baptist had departed, "Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see?—a prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." Matt. 11 : 7-14. On another occasion, when the disciples of Jesus asked him, saying, "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" "Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." Matt. 17 : 10-13.

§ 11. II. From the exact fulfillment of the prophetic description of the harbinger, in John the Baptist; before I proceed, it will be necessary to remove the objection frequently urged, "that John himself declared that he was *not Elijah*, and that therefore the Messiah is not yet come; and that Jesus, in direct opposition to John the Baptist, declared that he *was the Elijah* that should first come." In answer, I would observe that Elijah is nowhere called *Elijah the prophet*, either in the Old or New Testament, but always

Elijah the Tishbite. The prediction therefore contains simply a promise of a *prophet*, and calls him Elijah merely with respect of similarity of character and disposition. That this is the meaning, is evident from the exposition given of it by the angel Gabriel, in the words already quoted, viz. "that he shall go before him in the *spirit* and *power* of *Elijah*." Nor is it an unfrequent thing for a person to be called by another man's name merely because of similarity of character or conduct. Thus the Messiah is frequently called David; Hosea, 3 : 5. Ezek. 34 : 23. 37 : 24; not because he was David *personally*, or his *Son*, but because David was an eminent type of him. Thus also Phinechas is often called Elijah, and Elijah is called Phinechas, because of the similarity of their zeal for the Lord of hosts. See Kimchi 1 Chron. 9 : 20. Targum Jonathan, Exod. 6 : 18. Baal Hat. Numb. 25 : 12. Pocock. Not. Port. Mos. page 219. Some of our Rabbins acknowledge that no one can determine whether the messenger and harbinger is to be Elijah *personally*, or only *like* to him in *degree* as a prophet, and in disposition for zeal and piety, and that the event only can determine it. See R. Tanchuma in loco. Maimonides Tract. Melachim Cap. ult. Port. Mosis Notes, c. 6, p. 219. Hence when John the Baptist was asked whether he was Elijah, he answered in the negative, i. e. not Elijah in person; but being asked again, "Who art thou then?" he declared in the affirmative; "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness," &c. &c. Nor did our Lord mean that John the Baptist was Elijah *personally*, for he calls him *more* than a *prophet*, Matt. 11 : 9; but *like* unto him, as the antitype is not only like, but far superior to the type. Having made these observations, I hope my dear Benjamin is prepared to receive the evidence that the prediction concerning the harbinger has been fulfilled in John the Baptist.

§ 12. 1. As it respects the similarity between him and Elijah. This might be shown at considerable length, but, to avoid prolixity, I will only observe that there was a strik-

ing similarity in their manner of dress; in their austere way of living; in their temper and disposition; in their piety and holiness; in their courage and integrity; in re-proving vice; and in their zeal and usefulness in the cause of God and religion.

§ 13. 2. As it respects his office. 1. "To prepare the way of the Lord;" alluding to a common and well known custom, that when a great man or potentate traveled, a runner went before him, to see that the way be prepared. This John did, as foretold, by lifting up his voice in the wilderness, preaching repentance, directing to Jesus, as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." John, 1 : 29. His labors were most extensive and useful; for in the space of six months, before Christ came, he traveled and preached throughout the country round about Jordan, Luke, 3 : 3. 2. "To turn the hearts of the fathers to," or rather with "the children," as Kimchi observes; *Al* for *Im*, i. e. abundance of people, both fathers and children; and thus we read "that Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan went after him." Matt. 3 : 5. 3. "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse;" i. e. those that would not believe in the Lord, whose way John prepared.

§ 14. The prophet proceeds to predict the calamities which should follow. Mal. 4 : 5. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the *great and dreadful day of the Lord*." There can be no doubt that this great and dreadful day is a prediction of the awful calamities which befell our nation at the destruction of Jerusalem. For if we examine the histories of the former times ever so minutely, we shall not be able to find any *national afflictions* or *miseries* whatsoever to be compared with those which our people suffered at that time. To this dreadful day, John the Baptist alluded in his address to the Pharisees, in Matt. 3 : 2, 7, 10, 12. But the Lord Jesus Christ has more fully predicted those calamities, which have been most punctual-

ly accomplished. See Matt. 24 : 15–21. Mark, 13 : 19. Luke, 21 : 20–24. compare Dan. 9 : 26, 27.

§ 15. The reader might naturally have expected, in this place, a discussion on the nature, design, subjects and mode of John's baptism ; but having done this in my Essays on Baptism, the reader is referred to that work.

Having thus shown that the predictions concerning the harbinger have been fulfilled in John the Baptist, and John having declared that he was preparing the way for the Lord Jesus Christ, it follows that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. The miracles which Jesus wrought, form another of the credentials of his Messiahship, and will be the subject of my next letter. For the present, I bid thee
Farewell.

Letter VIII.

MESSIAH'S MIRACLES

Dear Brother Benjamin,

I have endeavored, in my last letter, to prove that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, from the credentials with which he was furnished, viz. the peculiar unction of the Holy Ghost ; the voice from heaven, declaring him to be the Son of God, with whom the Father is well pleased ; and the testimony of John the Baptist, the promised harbinger ; and I also promised to consider, in this letter, the miracles which Jesus wrought, as another of the credentials of his Messiahship. To this subject, therefore, I now solicit your most serious attention.

When I say that Christ wrought miracles, I mean that he performed such acts as were contrary to the usual course of nature, and evidently surpassed all human power.

§ 1. That miracles, when properly attested, are sufficient evidence of a divine mission, is generally admitted, especially by our nation. Hence, when Moses asked the Lord by what means he should convince Pharaoh and the Israelites that the Lord had sent him, Jehovah replied that he would work miracles by him, which would be sufficient credentials. Hence our Savior considered his miracles a stronger evidence of his Messiahship, than even the testimony of John. "I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." John, 5 : 36.

§ 2. I. That the Messiah was to work miracles, is evident, 1. From the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Moses tells us, Deut. 18 : 15-18, "that the Lord would raise up a prophet like unto himself." That this prophet was to be the Messiah, we shall show hereafter. Now, if that prophet was to be like unto Moses, he must, like him, perform miracles, to confirm his mission. The prophet Isaiah foretold that, in the days of the Messiah, "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for, in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Isa. 35 : 5, 6. 42 : 7.

§ 3. 2. It is also evident, from the testimony of our nation. In our Lord's time they expected it. On several occasions they asked for a sign from heaven. Matt. 12 : 38. Luke, 11 : 16. "And many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did." John, 2 : 23. Those who had witnessed his miracles in feeding thousands with five loaves and two small fishes, said, "This is, of a truth, that prophet that should come into the world." John, 6 : 14. And on another occasion they said, "When Christ cometh, will he

do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" John, 7 : 31. Hence it appears that the people did expect that the Messiah would work miracles, and that they considered them sufficient credentials to prove his divine mission. Our Rabbins, since the time of Christ, have expressed the same opinion. They expect as many and as great miracles to be wrought by the Messiah as were wrought at the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. Some have asserted that as the Messiah was to be greater than Moses, so, when he came, he should work greater miracles than Moses had done. See R. Levi Ben Gershon on Deut. 34 : 10, fol. 198, c. 2. Nay, Maimonides himself is obliged to acknowledge that miracles will be wrought by the Messiah, and that upon the account of them he would meet with a great deal of respect from the nations of the world. Pocock Port. Mosis. p. 158. Abarbanel Cap. Fidei. C. 13, says, "that all feasts shall cease in the days of the Messiah, except *expiation* and *purim* ; and he assigns this reason : that these feasts had been instituted in commemoration of the miracles wrought at the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt ; but in the days of the Messiah they shall see far greater miracles, in comparison whereof the former are not worth remembering." He further observes : "Whereas the Psalmist (Ps. 74 : 9) complains of the want of miracles, the prophet Joel (2 : 28) foretold the restoration of prophecy and miracles in the days of the Messiah." See also Zohar. Ex. fol. 3, 4, and 4, 2. Targum on Isa. 53 : 8. Sanhedrim, C. 11, § 1. Targum, Ps. 18 : 32.

§ 4. II. Jesus Christ wrought miracles. This is not only affirmed by the evangelists, who were men of probity, honesty, and integrity, but is acknowledged by our own Rabbins, especially in Toldoth Yeshu, a book written in direct opposition to the Christian religion. But whilst the fact is not denied, the cause is disputed.

§ 5. 1. In our Lord's time they ascribed them to the power of Satan. In the evangelical history of our blessed

Lord, we read that when Jesus had cast a devil out of one that was both blind and dumb, and had restored the man to the use of his sight and speech again, the Scribes and Pharisees said of him, "This fellow does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." Matt. 12. Mark, 3. Luke, 11. To this false and blasphemous charge Jesus replied in so forcible a manner, by showing the improbability and absurdity of supposing that Beelzebub would lend his assistance to overthrow his own power, and that Satan would cast out Satan, that this groundless and ridiculous charge does not appear to have been afterward renewed during Jesus' life. A writer in the Jewish Repository has justly remarked: "How they could bring themselves to ascribe that benevolence and charity which every one of Jesus' miracles manifested, and that pure and heavenly doctrine which they were wrought in confirmation of, to a co-operation of a spirit whose very name denotes enmity, hatred, and malice to man as well as to God, and who is the author and promoter of evil, is, I confess, beyond my conception; but so they have done."

Besides, the very first promise of a Messiah was, that he should bruise the head of the serpent, or, as John explains it, to destroy the works of the devil, Gen. 3 : 15. 1 John, 3 : 8; and Jesus Christ openly declared that he came to overthrow the kingdom of Satan; many of his miracles were exercised on devils themselves, to their shame, terror, and dispossession of the habitations they had invaded; he also declared them to be evil, wicked, malicious, unclean, and lying spirits; reserved for everlasting destruction in hell, under the wrath of the great God; and for this they ceased not to oppose him, to stir up all the world against him, until they thought they had prevailed in his death.

§ 6. 2. Our modern Rabbins, aware of the unanswerable refutation to the forementioned opinion, have presented it in a new dress, viz. that he wrought his miracles by the power of the name Jehovah, or *Shem Hamphorash*. This

fabrication of lies and blasphemies is contained in *Toldoth Yeschu*; a nameless production, (no one can tell its author, age, or place of birth,) which has frequently been refuted. The shortest account and refutation I have met with, is in the Jewish Repository of 1813, and is as follows: "One would expect to find this formidable charge supported by, at least, some plausible evidence; but, alas! it is supported by nothing whatever, but by two fabulous stories, so utterly incredible and contemptible in themselves, and contrary to each other, that they look more like the dreams of lunatics, than the inventions of men in their proper senses. The first of them is, in substance, as follows: "Once upon a time, Jesus went into the temple, and saw, somewhere there, the name Jehovah written; this name he exactly transcribed upon a piece of parchment, which he concealed in a wound which he had made in his foot for this purpose, and so carried it away with him unobserved; for it was unlawful to carry any thing out of the temple. Many others, indeed, who went into the temple, saw this name there written, as well as Jesus, but not being so cunning as he was, and therefore not using the same artful method of preserving and conveying it away with them that he did; the right pronunciation of the name was driven out of their heads by the *bellowing* of lions, or the barking of two dogs, which were placed over the two iron pillars that stood before the temple gate, and thus Jesus alone was possessed of the right pronunciation of the name Jehovah."

But of some people it is said, "that they have need of a good memory," for the second story is, "that Jesus, in the presence of Queen Helena, (Queen of Adiabene,) said, I can raise the dead; upon which the Jews ordered Judas Iscariot to go into the temple; and to obtain the right pronunciation of the name Jehovah, in the same way that Jesus had done; Judas accordingly did so: after this, in hearing of Judas, he boasted that he could work miracles, and to show he could do so, flew up into the air; but Judas imme-

diately flew up after him ; in consequence of which a scuffle ensued, in which Judas struck Jesus, so that he fell and broke his arm." This second story flatly contradicts the former ; the first saith, that no one, during Jesus' life, knew the right pronounciation of the name Jehovah but himself ; whereas, it appears by this second story, that Judas Iscariot knew the pronounciation of this name as well, nay, better than Jesus, for to this superiority it must have been owing that he was able to cast down Jesus to the ground, and to break his arm by the fall. These stories then, by contradicting each other, prove that both of them cannot be true, but both may be false ; and that both of them are manifestly false, will appear from an examination of the particulars mentioned in them.

The first story says, "that Jesus and many others saw the name Jehovah written somewhere in the temple ;" but where this somewhere was, is not mentioned, for very substantial reasons ; because this was written upon nothing contained in that part of the temple into which the people were suffered to enter, nor was it written in any part of the temple, but only on a golden plate, which was fastened on the front of the high priest's miter, on which were engraven the words "*Kodesh Lyhovah*," i. e. holiness to the Lord, or to Jehovah ; and this inscription must have been seen by many, and might have been seen by all present, as often as the high priest officiated in public ; and as every one, who could read his Hebrew Bible, could read this inscription too, it must appear very strange that none of those who could read the name Jehovah could remember the true pronounciation of it ; so that, to come at this, it was necessary for Jesus to obtain it by stealth ; but, except when the high priest was officiating publicly, this inscription never could be seen by the people ; for, at all other times, the high priest's miter, on the front of which this inscription was, together with the rest of his ornaments and dress, was laid up, at first in the northern chamber, where none but priests

were suffered to enter, and afterward in the eastern tower; and the doors of the chamber wherein it was kept were not only locked, but sealed; so that this part of the story is by no means credible.

“The next thing affirmed is, that when Jesus had written the name Jehovah on a piece of parchment, he concealed the writing in a wound he had made in his foot for that purpose; but when he could have concealed the writing as well, if not better, in some part of his clothing, what, in the name of common sense, could tempt him to conceal it in a wound made in his foot, in a part so tender, and so apt to inflame, and even to fester, by having a piece of parchment thrust into it; besides, that the discharge of blood occasioned by the wound, and of corruption occasioned by the parchment, would, in all probability, have so stained and defaced the writing as to render it illegible: this, therefore, is incredible, and more absurd than the former. The last particular mentioned in this story is, that all the others who, as well as Jesus, saw the name Jehovah written somewhere in the temple, had the true pronounciation driven out of their heads by the roaring of lions or the barking of two dogs, which were placed over the two iron pillars which stood before the temple gate. But lions and dogs being unclean beasts, and dogs particularly, having been declared by the law (Deut. 23 : 18) to be such an abomination that even the price they were sold for was forbidden to be brought into the house of the Lord, it is utterly incredible that any of these beasts were suffered to be brought within the precincts of the temple, or that a declared abomination was placed over the pillars which stood before the temple gate. Besides, the Jewish historian Josephus (Ant. Lib. 15, ch. 14) tells us that the whole of the fabric of the temple (and consequently the pillars here mentioned) was built of durable white stone. From all which it appears that the lions, dogs, iron pillars, and all the rest of this absurd story, had no existence except in the wild imaginations of its fabrica-

tors. And so much for the first story: now for the second.

“The second story tells us what Jesus said in the presence of queen Helena, and what afterward happened between him and Judas Iscariot. The scene of both these transactions is laid in Jerusalem; but the Jews do not pretend that queen Helena was ever at Jerusalem before her conversion to their religion, and she was converted to Judaism in the sixth year of the emperor Claudius, that is, in the thirteenth year after Jesus had been put to death by the Jews, and when Judas Iscariot, driven to despair by an accusing and tormenting conscience, had made way with himself; and so much for this second story, and so much for the charge brought against Jesus, that he wrought his miracles by magic arts,” (or rather by the power of the Shem Hamphoresh,) “which hath no other foundation but the two foregoing most incredible stories.” I hope my dear Benjamin hath too much good sense to need any further arguments to show the fallacy of this rabbinical fable. In the sequel of this letter it will be shown that Jesus Christ performed his miracles *by his own power*. I will here briefly state that,

§ 7. The design of his miracles was twofold: viz. to prove the *reality* of his *divinity* and the *truth* of his *Messiahship*. The *manner* in which he wrought his *miracles*, the *concomitant* circumstances, and the *language* of the sacred writers who recorded them, clearly show that he acted as a *divine person*, that in various instances he wished this to appear, and that the inspired historians viewed matters in no other light. Permit me, my dear Benjamin, to call your particular attention to the following observation: Jesus wrought his miracles in his *own* name, and not in the *name of God*. His apostles, on the contrary, never wrought a miracle in *their own* name, *nor* in the *name of God*, but in the name of Jesus. Luke, 10: 17. Acts, 3: 16. 16: 18. Again, Jesus wrought his miracles *by his own power*, and that by a *mere word* of *command*, and *whenever he pleased*.

Matt. 8 : 2, 3, 16. Luke, 4 : 36. John, 5 : 21, and 10 : 37, 38. Not so with Moses; he was *only* an *instrument*, and could not work miracles *at all times*. "For saith the Lord, I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders, which I will do in the midst thereof." Ex. 3 : 20. Again, "See that thou do all these wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand." Ex. 4 : 21. Moses could neither bring nor remove them. But Jesus was the author of his mighty works, and he did them whenever he pleased. He performed them by the word of his mouth, or by the touch of his garment, when he was present, and when he was at a distance. Nothing could withstand his power or his will. He rebuked the sea with supreme authority, which convinced the disciples of his divinity. Mark, 4 : 39, 41. This is the character and prerogative of Jehovah. Ps. 104 : 6, 7. 106 : 9. Many who saw these miracles, being convinced of his divinity, made him the object of faith; and for this purpose they are recorded. John, 2 : 23. 6 : 2. 11 : 4. 20 : 30, 31.

§ 8. Our blessed Savior frequently appealed to his miracles as the credentials of his mission. When John the Baptist sent two of his disciples inquiring, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Matt. 11 : 2-5. Here we perceive that Jesus Christ answered their question neither in the affirmative nor negative, but referred them to the miracles which he wrought, agreeably to the predictions concerning the Messiah. John the Evangelist tells us that the miracles of Jesus are recorded, "that ye might believe that Jesus is *the Christ*, the *Son of God*." John, 20 : 31. And the apostle Peter thus addressed the multitude on the day of Pentecost: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders,

and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Acts, 2: 22.

§ 9. And now, my dear brother, having shown that miracles are sufficient credentials to prove a divine mission, that the Messiah was expected to work miracles, and that Jesus Christ wrought many miracles to prove both his divinity and his mission; let me ask you, is it unreasonable to believe that he is the Messiah? Have I not the same evidence for believing that he is the promised Messiah, as our fathers had for believing that Moses was sent to bring them out of Egypt? What would you say if a pamphlet like the Toldoth Yeshu was circulating a story that Moses had made himself master of magic in Egypt, and stole the name Jehovah, and by its power wrought all his miracles, and persuaded our fathers that he had been sent by God, and thus acted as an impostor? Would you give credit to such a report without the strongest evidence of its authenticity? But the Toldoth Yeshu is destitute of every evidence of truth is full of contradictions, and is evidently a fable not known till many centuries after the death of Christ. But before I dismiss the subject I will endeavor to make a brief comparison between the miracles of Christ and those of Moses; and I trust it will clearly appear that the superiority is greatly in favor of the former. I will mention but a few particulars.

§ 10. 1. Notice, my dear Benjamin, the *greatness* of the miracles which Jesus wrought. He raised the dead to life again, and one that had been dead already four days, and seen corruption. He cured the most incurable diseases. A woman that had labored twelve years of an issue of blood, that had wasted her estate upon physicians without success, was cured by the mere touch of his garment. He cures another that had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, that was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. Another, who had an infirmity thirty-eight years, he heals with a word of his mouth. He restores one to sight who

had been born blind. He cures the leper, and effectually rebukes the fever. He speaks the word, and the demoniac is dispossessed, and the paralytic cured. He multiplies a few loaves and fishes to satisfy the wants of five thousand, and the fragments exceed the original stock. He commands devils, and they obey; he speaks to the raging waves, and there is a great calm. Well might the spectators exclaim, "Such things were never seen in Israel!"

§ 11. 2. Observe, next, the *number* and *variety* of his miracles. Our Rabbins ascribe to Moses seventy-six miracles, and to all the other prophets only seventy-four; but the miracles related by the evangelists to have been wrought by our blessed Jesus, by far exceed those done by Moses and all the other prophets together. And what shall be said of those many more which are not recorded? The evangelist John saith, "that if they should be written, he supposed that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," John, 21 : 25; a figure of speech, bold indeed, but such as our people were well acquainted with. Hence, "many of the people believed on him, and said, when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than this man hath done?" Equally surprising is the variety of his miracles. Had he cured many diseases of the same kind, it might have been presumed that he had acquired peculiar skill in that one particular disease. But here is no room left for suspicion. For Jesus not only healed *all manner of diseases*, but he displayed his almighty power over death, the king of terror; over Satan, the god of this world; and over the uncontrollable elements of wind and water.

§ 12. 3. Let us notice the *manner* in which Jesus wrought his miracles. How different was the conduct of Jesus in working miracles, from that of Moses and the apostles. They acted with the most profound humility and direct appeal to the Almighty, as his agents; but Christ, as the Lord of universal nature, in whose hand was the life of every living thing. They never forgot themselves in their

ministerial character, so far as to attempt to work a miracle at their own pleasure, in their own names, and by their own power. But Jesus wrought miracles in the same manner as he created the world. In the beginning, "God said, let there be light, and light was;" in like manner he said to the stormy wind and boisterous seas, "peace, be still, and there was a great calm"—to the leprous, "be clean"—to the crooked, "be straight"—to the deaf, "hear"—to the blind, "see"—to the dumb "speak"—to the withered hand, "be stretched out"—to the dead, "arise"—and to the putrid carcass, "come forth." Here allow me, dear Benjamin, to observe, that if our Lord and Savior was nothing more than a mere man, and acted solely by commission from his Father, in like manner as Moses and the prophets did, and in no higher sense, there was an arrogance and presumption in his manner infinitely unbecoming such a character. But upon the principle that he was God, as well as man, all is plain, natural, and easy.

§ 13. 4. The *utility* of our Lord's miracles is another circumstance which deserves our notice. All the miracles which Moses wrought, were injurious either to men or beasts, or both. But of Jesus it is witnessed, "that he went about doing good." He who once filled mount Sinai with smoke, and thunder, and lightning, so that Moses himself exceedingly feared and quaked, might have shaken the pillars of the earth, darkened the sun, moon and stars, and caused fire and brimstone to come down from heaven to consume his adversaries; but he "came not to destroy, but to save the world." His miracles were so many acts of mercy and relief. "His errand was to bring glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men."

§ 14. 5. In closing the comparison, we notice the *publicity* of Christ's miracles. Our Lord did not shun the light, for his deeds were good. *Multitudes* witnessed the cure of the paralytic. All the people were amazed at the cure of the blind and dumb. Much people were with Jesus when

he raised the widow's son to life. The man that had been 38 years under his affliction, was cured in the city of Jerusalem, at a festival where all the Jews were collected. The demoniac was dispossessed in the synagogue, and Lazarus was raised from the dead when many of the Jews were present.

§ 15. I might further observe, that Jesus Christ not only possessed in himself the power of working miracles, but he also communicated it to others. When he sent forth the twelve apostles, "he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." After his resurrection also, when he renewed the commission of preaching the Gospel to his disciples, he said to them, "These signs shall follow them that believe; in *my name* shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." This promise of our Lord was abundantly fulfilled; both during his continuance on earth, and after his ascension into heaven, his disciples wrought these and many other mighty works, by which they fully attested the doctrine which he had appointed them to publish.

Now, my dear brother Benjamin, notwithstanding this very brief and imperfect account of the miracles of Christ, may I not expect your approbation of our Lord's declaration concerning our brethren in his day: "If I had not done among them the works which *none other* man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." John, 15: 24. May your sentiment be like that of some of our fathers, who said, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" and like them, also, may you believe in him as *the Christ*, the *Son of God*. Yea, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom they have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts, 2: 36.

Letter IX.**JESUS THE PROPHET.**

Beloved Brother Benjamin,

In describing the engagement of Messiah, we mentioned that he was to reveal the will of God to men; or, in other words, that he was to sustain the office of a Prophet. I will therefore now endeavor to show more particularly that the Messiah was to be a Prophet; that he was to be like unto Moses; that Jesus Christ is that Prophet; and will describe the way in which he reveals the will of God, as another evidence that he is the promised Messiah. The office of a prophet is, to teach the people the will of God; to prove his mission by miracles, and illustrate his doctrines and precepts by his holy life and exemplary conduct. That Jesus Christ thus exemplified his holy and heavenly doctrines, that he confirmed his mission by miracles, we have already proved in preceding letters. I shall now proceed to illustrate the subject in the method already proposed, viz.

§ 1. I. Messiah was to be a Prophet. This is evident from prophecies in the Old Testament. The first and most remarkable is that in Deut. 18: 15-19. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall

command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." With respect to this office, he was promised "to preach good tidings to the meek," to be "a light to enlighten the Gentiles," "a witness to the people," and "to have the tongue of the learned."

§ 2. We argue, from the general expectation which prevailed at the time of our Lord, that the Savior should appear in the character of a glorious Prophet. When John the Baptist appeared, our people sent priests and Levites to him, asking, "Art thou that prophet?" John, 1: 21; and when Jesus performed his miracles, they said once and again, "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world." John, 6: 14. 7: 40. Yea, even the Samaritans, who had only the Pentateuch, expected that the Messiah would make a complete and perfect revelation of the will of God. For when Jesus told the woman of Samaria that the time is come when the mode of worship was to be changed, she replied, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come he *will tell* us all things." John, 4: 25.

§ 3. Some of our modern Rabbins, as well as the more ancient, acknowledge that Messiah is to be a Prophet, to make new revelations and give new laws. It is laid down as a principle in *Neve Shalom*, "that the King Messiah shall be exalted above Abraham, *be high above Moses*, and raised above the ministering angels." And it is for the excellency of the revelation made by him, that he is so exalted above Moses. Hence Maimonides himself acknowledges, *Tract. de Regibus*, "that, at the coming of the Messiah hidden and deep things shall be revealed, or laid open to all." And you know, my brother, the technical expression used by our Rabbins; when disputing on any subject, and cannot agree, they drop it, by saying *Taika*, i. e. let it rest till Messiah comes, and he will solve all questions and disputes. And no doubt it was to this common saying the

woman of Samaria alluded in the passage just quoted: "he will tell us all things." In Zohar in Gen. fol. 74, 1, it is said, "In the days of the Messiah, even the little children in the world shall find out the hidden things of wisdom, and know in it the ends and computations (of times;) and at that time he shall be made manifest unto all." Again, Lev. 10: 1, Judah saith, "The holy blessed God will reveal the deep mysteries of the law in the times of the King Messiah, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, &c.; and it is written, "They shall not teach every man his brother." Maimonides saith, "The whole world shall be filled with the words of the law, and with the words of the commandments." Hilchoth Melachim, c. 11, § 4, and 12, 5.

§ 4. II. We will now show that the Messiah was to be a prophet like unto Moses, and that Jesus Christ is that Prophet. It is very evident that the prediction in Duet. 18 had no reference to *Joshua*, as some would apply it; for although he was appointed a leader and commander of the people of Israel, to whom they hearkened, yet he was no prophet, nor was he ever accounted as such by our nation; and instead of his being like unto Moses, there is a striking difference in the most prominent features of their characters. Moses is called the lawgiver; Joshua gave no law, but followed and executed the law given by Moses. Moses was made ruler of Israel by the Lord God of Israel himself; Joshua was made ruler by Moses, according to the command of God. Moses received the law from the immediate hand of God himself; Joshua received that same law from the hand of Moses, a fellow mortal. Moses was a legislator, a lawgiver; and neither Joshua, nor any other prophet whom Israel yet acknowledges, ever pretended to such a character. Joshua never ascended the mount into the cloud of glory, nor did God converse with him face to face, as a man does to his friend. Besides, the Scripture plainly declares that Joshua was not the prophet like unto Moses; for Duet. 18: 9 shows that the prophet alluded to was to arise in the latter

days, after Israel possessed the land; and lest there should be any misapprehension, it is written in Deut. 34: 10-12, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face; in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of Israel.

§ 5. Nor is it applicable to *Jeremiah*, as others would apply it. There was nothing peculiar in him, to style him a prophet like unto Moses. Nor could it mean a *succession* of prophets; for *one single* prophet is promised, and not many; nor was there ever a regular succession of prophets; and our nation have been without any prophet for two thousand years. Nor hath there ever been a prophet like unto Moses, until the appearance of Jesus Christ. Hence our people have, to the present day, always magnified Moses above all the prophets, calling him, "the father and prince of the prophets, and that all the prophets prophesied from the fountain of his prophecy." Maim. *Ye-sod Hattorah*, c. 7. Sec. 6. Seder *Tephil.* f. 212.

Having made it manifest, that the Messiah was to be a prophet; and that Moses in particular, prophesied that the Messiah was to be a prophet like unto himself; and that no prophet, until Jesus came, was like unto Moses; I shall now show, and I hope to the perfect satisfaction of my dear Benjamin, that Jesus of Nazareth is that promised prophet. This is evident,

§ 6. 1. From the repeated application of the prediction to Jesus Christ, in the New Testament. When the apostles Peter and John, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, had cured a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, a great multitude had collected at the temple at Jerusalem, and were filled with wonder and astonishment; Peter, with holy boldness, addressed the people, and showed, from the writings of the prophets, that those things were

to come to pass in the days of the Messiah, and he referred to the prediction now under consideration. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you; and it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people," Acts, 3 : 22, 23. In like manner did the martyr Stephen apply it to Jesus Christ, Acts, 7 : 37. And there can be no doubt that, in direct reference to this prophecy, the voice from heaven, at the baptism of Jesus, and particularly afterward, at his transfiguration, in the presence of Moses and Elijah, said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye him.*" Matt. 3 17. and 17 : 5.

§ 7. 2. This is further evident from the striking similarity between Jesus Christ and Moses. This is a subject which, of itself, would furnish most pleasing, instructive, and edifying material, sufficient to fill several letters. Many eminent divines have treated it in a masterly manner; but perhaps none has succeeded better than Dr. Jortin, to whom I am indebted for the following abridgment: "Moses was preserved in his infancy from the wrath of king Pharaoh, so was Christ from the wrath of Herod; Moses fled from his country, Christ fled into Egypt; Moses returned by the advice of an angel, so did Christ; Moses refused to be an heir to a king, Christ refused to be made a king; Moses was learned in all wisdom, Christ grew in wisdom and stature; Moses contended with magicians and conquered them, Christ contended with devils and overthrew them all; Moses was a lawgiver, a prophet, a worker of miracles, and a king; Christ was all this in a superior degree" (and Priest after the order of Melchizedeck;) "Moses brought darkness over all the land, Christ's death on the cross brought darkness over Judea; the darkness on Egypt was followed with the destruction of the first-born, Christ's darkness was

followed by the destruction of the Jews by Titus Vespasian; Moses foretold the calamities of the Jews, Christ foretold the dreadful siege and ruin of Jerusalem; the Spirit in Moses was put on the seventy elders, the Spirit of Christ was poured on the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples; Moses was victorious over kings and nations of the world, Christ has been victorious over kings and nations of the world by his glorious Gospel; Moses conquered Amalek by holding up his hands, Christ conquers Satan and sinners by his intercession in heaven; Moses turned away the wrath of God from the provoking Israelites, Christ turns away the wrath of God from all the millions of his people by his death and his prayers; Moses ratified a covenant between God and the Israelites by blood sprinkled on the people, Christ ratifies the covenant of grace by shedding his own blood, as the blood of God, Acts, 20: 28; Moses instituted the passover, Christ instituted the Lord's supper; Moses lifted up the serpent to cure the stung Israelites, Christ was lifted up on the cross to cure our souls, stung and poisoned with sin; the affection of Moses to the people was repaid with ingratitude, we have all been ungrateful to Jesus Christ; Moses was ill-used by his own family, Christ's own near relations did not believe on him; Moses had a wicked and perverse people to deal with for forty years, Christ had a people of the most perverse and wicked dispositions; Moses was very meek above all men, Christ was infinitely meeker than Moses, and all the meekest men in the world; the people could not go into the land of Canaan till Moses was dead, not a soul could ever be admitted to enter heaven but on the foundation of the death of Christ, who hath opened the kingdom of heaven, by his atoning blood, for all believers; Moses died on account of the people's rebellion, Christ died for the sins of his people; Moses went up to die on Mount Nebo, Christ went up to die on Mount Calvary; Moses died in the vigor of his age, Christ died in the flower and glory of his manhood; Moses

never felt sickness or decay, Christ's body had no seeds of death; Moses was buried and no man saw his body, the unbelieving Jews did not deserve to see the body of Christ after his resurrection; Moses before his death promised another prophet, Christ before his death promised another comforter, even the eternal Spirit, in all the glory of his mission and divine influence in the church to the end of the world."

Who can read this amazing and beautiful resemblance between Moses and Christ, and not be struck with astonishment and delight? A fruitful imagination may find out a likeness where there is none; but as the Doctor concludes, "Is this similitude and correspondence, in so many things, between Moses and Christ, the effect of mere chance? Let us search all the records of universal history, and see if we can find a man who was so like to Moses as Christ was, and so like to Christ as Moses was. If we cannot find such an one, then have we found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, who is over all, blessed for ever. Amen.

§ 8. 3. Another proof that Jesus Christ is the prophet predicted by Moses, arises from the execution of the threatening in that prediction: "Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, *I will require it of him*," i. e. I will punish him for it; and which the apostle expresses by a "being destroyed from among the people," Acts, 3: 23. And Maimonides in *Yesod Hatorah*, c. 9. sec. 4. says, "that such a person is guilty of death by the hands of heaven. Surely, my brother, never was there a more remarkable fulfillment of prophecy than this, in the destruction of millions of our dear people, and the dispersion of the whole nation, not so much for their heinous crime of crucifying the Lord of glory, as for their refusing to obey his Gospel, and acknowledging him as the Messiah, the prophet, like unto Moses, after his resurrection. O, that our beloved brethren and kinsmen would

seriously consider this part of the subject. O that they would trace the unparalleled sufferings which they have been called to endure, for so long and unprecedented duration, to the true cause! I cannot but believe that they would soon be convinced that the only and true cause of it is stated by the apostle, viz. "For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of *the Jews*, who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: *For the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.*" 1 Thess. 2 : 14-16. The Lord Jesus Christ himself expressly foretold, and plainly predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the commonwealth of our nation, as a punishment for rejecting him. That our people have suffered these national calamities, is attested by one of our own historians, and corroborated by other writers. Josephus has described the commencement, progress, and conclusion of that destructive war, which ended in the final overthrow of that renowned city, wherein God had chosen to put his name and manifest his glory.

Does it not strike you, dear Benjamin, with astonishment, that when Senacherib came with a mighty army against Hezekiah, God declared that he would defend Jerusalem against all the power of the enemy; and to fulfill his promise, an angel slew, in one night, a hundred and four score and five thousand of the Assyrians, and thereby forced the assailants to a precipitate retreat out of the country. Isa. 37 : 36. But when the Roman general led his legions into Judea, no such protection was afforded. On the contrary, the country was wasted, the city was encompassed by a multitude of armed men, who carried on the siege with the greatest vigor, and drove the besieged to the greatest extremities. The inhabitants, instead of uniting their strength in defence of the place, were unhappily rent into factions,

and opposed one to another. These waged an intestine war within the walls, which were constantly assaulted by the foe without. Thus the city was divided against itself, and every man's sword turned against his fellow. To complete the distress, the famine prevailed to so great a degree that the tender mother killed, roasted, and ate her own infant. See Josephus, B. vii. ch. 8. Deut. 28 : 57. Multitudes of people were thus consumed by the sword and by hunger; and after all, Jerusalem, God's chosen city, was taken by storm—the holy temple burned with fire; and after a most terrible slaughter, our whole nation was scattered abroad, and condemned, like Cain, to wander as fugitives and vagabonds in the earth. Here let us pause a moment, my dear Benjamin, and ask, wherefore hath the Lord thus done unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? why hath he given up his people to be destroyed by the sword and by the famine? He protected them against the tyranny of Pharaoh, and preserved them in their passage through the Red Sea, where the Egyptian army was drowned. By a glorious cloud he conducted them through the pathless desert, and in that barren land he fed them with angels' food; the nations of Canaan he overthrew before them, and granted them privileges which no other people under heaven enjoyed. But now—O my heart weeps within me—now this very people are banished from the land of promise, exposed to numerous hardships, and live in a degraded state of exile, which has lasted more than seventeen hundred years, and none can tell the end.

This amazing change in the condition of our people cannot fail to strike every attentive mind, for they are fallen from the greatest height of national prosperity to the greatest depth of national adversity. Yet surely God hath not done it without cause. All that he hath done in afflicting our people, when he delivered them into the hand of the Chaldeans, who burned Jerusalem with fire, and carried the people into captivity, a plain and satisfactory reason was

assigned for it in the following words: "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people till there was no remedy." 2 Chron. 26: 16. And it is on this principle alone that the last destruction of Jerusalem and the present dispersion of our people can be accounted for. Since the Babylonish captivity, they have not been addicted to gross idolatry in worshipping graven images and adoring the work of men's hands; so far from it, they have been particularly tenacious of their own laws, and have carefully avoided all connections with the nations among whom they sojourn. Yet it is evident that they must be guilty of some very grievous and heinous crime, otherwise God would never suffer them to be oppressed and scattered as they have been. Their crime, then, is evidently the rejection of Jesus Christ. They would not hearken unto that prophet like unto Moses, whom the Lord raised up; they treated both him and his followers with the greatest indignity, and cruelly persecuted them unto death; they would not hearken to God's words which that prophet spake in God's name, and God hath required it of them, by punishing them for their disobedience. The curses denounced in the song of Moses have fallen upon them because they rejected and crucified the Lord of glory. O that our beloved brethren, who have suffered so much, and who are still suffering for their sins, would be persuaded seriously to consider the matter. What stronger proof of the truth of Christianity can possibly be given than the destruction of Jerusalem and their own dispersion, which Jesus predicted, and which have so remarkably come to pass? Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised God, is burned with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Would God suffer them thus to be spoiled and afflicted if they were obedient to his commandments? If they had done right in rejecting Jesus of Nazareth, would the Lord abandon them thus to the power of their enemies?

God has evidently confirmed the mission of Jesus Christ by destroying their commonwealth and expelling them from Canaan. O that the Lord would speedily pour upon our dear people "the spirit of grace and supplication, that they may look unto him whom they have pierced, and mourn for *it* as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for *it*, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Zech. 12: 10.

§ 9. 4. There are some other predictions respecting the prophetic office of the Messiah, which have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

From Isaiah, 9: 1, 2, it appears that Galilee was to be a conspicuous place of the Messiah's employment as prophet and teacher. Hence, although Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, yet he was educated and brought up in Galilee, and there he commenced his work as a prophet. Matt. 4: 12-16. Hence both Jesus and his disciples were called Galileans.

The same prophet foretold the matter of Messiah's preaching, in the 61st chap. 1-3. That this prophecy relates to the Messiah, is acknowledged by our Rabbins, and with it Jesus began his public ministry. Luke, 4: 1, 14-21, as has already been shown, and to it he referred John's disciples as a proof of his Messiahship. Matt. 11: 3-5. The little success which attended the ministry of Jesus, was likewise foretold. Isa. 53: 1. 6: 9, 10. Comp. Matt. 13: 13-16.

Although Jesus spake and taught as never man taught, and confirmed his doctrine by innumerable miracles, the most astonishing and the most benevolent, yet few, comparatively, believed in him.

§ 10. 5. The predictions which Jesus himself delivered, and the exact fulfillment of many of them, deserve our peculiar attention. Jesus Christ foretold, with wonderful exactness, not only the events which should befall himself, the sufferings which he should undergo, and the persecution which his disciples should experience, as well as the sup-

port they should receive, all of which were most minutely realized ; but he also foretold, with a precision which could result only from divine foreknowledge, the siege of our holy city ; the destruction of our temple ; and the fatal ruin which should overwhelm our nation ; events, of which, at that period, there did not seem the remotest probability. He foretold also the astonishing propagation of his Gospel, which has indeed, according to his description, resembled a grain of mustard seed, that, from being the smallest of seeds, becomes a great tree, under the shadow of which all the fowls of heaven can lodge in safety. In spite of all the opposition of our rulers, in spite of all the persecutions of heathen emperors, in spite of all the ridicule of philosophers and the malice of Satan, nay, in spite of the inveterate corruption of the human heart, the religion of the Gospel has been established in the world : and though in too many places debased by superstition and corrupted by heresy, it has, in the lives of its sincere professors, produced such fruits as most irrefragably demonstrate its divine origin.

The church of Christ, thus established, has continued nearly 1800 years unshaken by all the malice of its enemies. According to the prediction of its founder, the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against it. " Had the counsel of this work been of man, (according to the wise observation of our famous Rabbi Gamaliel,) it would have come to naught ;" but it is manifestly of God, since none have been able to overcome it.

§ 11. IV. We consider, next, the manner in which Jesus Christ exercises the office of a prophet. As the Mediator was to be the object of faith and fountain of happiness to the saints before his incarnation, as well as to those afterward, it was necessary that the covenant between the Father and Son should be revealed to them, that their faith and hope might rest upon a sure foundation. Hence we have already observed, that one of the covenant stipulations was, that the Mediator should reveal the will of his Father.

This revelation is comprehended in the single word *Gospel*, or *good news*, viz. how sinners are to be saved by faith in Christ. Hence the apostle assures us that the Gospel was preached to the fathers, Heb. 4 : 2. Gal. 3 : 8. The variety of methods used, and the different periods in which Christ made known the will of God, are subjects worthy of our attention, and would be considered, were it not that they would lead us too far away from our chain of argument. I shall with pleasure embrace the first opportunity of entering fully on that subject; at present I will simply state, that the time of Christ's teaching or acting as a prophet may be divided into two general parts, viz. before his incarnation, and afterward. The former is again divided into five periods.

§ 12. 1. From the fall of Adam to the flood. This period includes not only the first promise made to Adam, Gen. 3 : 15, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," which was the principle of faith and obedience to the fathers before the flood, as has already been shown, but also the revelations made to Seth, Enoch, Lamech and others. 2. From Noah to the giving of the law. With Noah God renewed the covenant, and established his worship in his house; and to Abraham our father, the promise of the Messiah was restricted and confirmed by oath; and with him and his seed God entered into a peculiar covenant, of which circumcision was the sign and seal. During this period, no doubt, God made many revelations to Melchisedeck and others, which have not been preserved. 3. From the giving of the law at Sinai, to the time of David and the prophets. Hitherto it might be styled the patriarchal dispensation, from thence to the death of Messiah it may be called the Jewish or Mosaic dispensation. 4. From David to the Babylonish captivity. 5. From thence to the time of Christ, which finishes the Old Testament. This period includes Ezra and the other prophets that assisted in the reformation of our people after their return from captivity, who in an especial manner excited the people to an expectation of the

coming of the Messiah. 6. From the preaching of John the Baptist, and commencement of Christ's personal ministry, to the end of time. This period is called the New Testament or Gospel dispensation, for reasons to be shown hereafter. Meditate on these things, my dear Benjamin, and may He, who taught as never man taught, make you wise unto salvation. Farewell.

Letter X.

PRIESTLY OFFICE OF THE MESSIAH.—FIRST, ORIGIN OF SACRIFICES.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. Allow me to propose to your very serious consideration, the predictions of the priestly office of the Messiah, and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ; which, I trust, will prove to you an additional satisfactory evidence of the truth of his Messiahship. As the principal glory of all the *Mosaical* worship consisted in the person and office of the high priest, so does the glory and efficacy of the *spiritual* worship consist in the person and office of the Messiah, the high priest of our profession. Hence the office of the priesthood is one of the most important subjects in all revelation; inasmuch as it exhibits to our view one of the most striking displays of the Gospel, and of the ground of guilty man's acceptance before God. Hence this doctrine hath, in all ages, by the craft and malice of Satan and his emissaries, been either directly opposed or variously corrupted.

To consider the subject in all its parts and ramifications

would by far exceed the limits of my design. I shall endeavor to give you a general statement of the priesthood; show that the Messiah was to be a priest; and that Jesus of Nazareth fully supported the character and office of a priest.

§ 2. Let us notice, first, the origin of the priesthood. Before the promulgation of the law of Moses, the fathers, or first-born in every family, the princes and the kings were priests. Thus Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Melchizedeck, Isaac, Jacob, and Job offered their *own* sacrifices. After the delivery of our nation from Egypt, the priesthood was confined to the tribe of Levi, and consisted of three orders, the high priest, priests, and Levites. The qualifications required in every priest, the time of service, the mode of consecration, the sacrifices offered on the occasion, and their different employments, are all mentioned in the books of Moses, and some will be mentioned hereafter. The high priest was the most eminent person of the sacerdotal family. Besides his suit of apparel common to him with his brethren which he wore on the day of expiation, he had other robes, called the golden garments, which he wore whilst attending his ordinary employ. Besides his liberty to interfere with the work of the other priests, he was the supreme judge of all controversies in the congregation of Israel, and directed all his brethren in their work. He alone entered the holy of holies, and performed the whole work of expiation for Israel on the annual day of atonement.

§ 3. That the Messiah was to be a priest, was *typified* in Melchizedeck and Aaron, and *predicted* in the following passages of sacred writ: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck." Ps. 110 : 4. Again, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, behold the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and the counsel of peace

shall be between them both." Zech. 6 : 12, 13. That this last prediction relates to the Messiah, and was so understood by our ancient Rabbins, hath already been shown ; but that the former, viz. Ps. 110, belongs to him, our modern Rabbins will by no means allow, and that for no other reason than their determined opposition to Jesus of Nazareth, blessed be his holy name. They are well aware, that if this Psalm be a literal description of the Messiah, it establishes the truth of the most important and the most controverted doctrines of our holy religion.

§ 4. I shall therefore endeavor to show the principal matter contained in this Psalm, point out the penman of it, and prove that it relates to the Messiah. The contents may be divided into three parts; the first four verses contain a prophetic description of Jehovah's declaration concerning the person called by the Psalmist, "*his Lord*." In the next two verses the Psalmist makes an address to *his Lord*, and in the last verse he merely hints at his state of humiliation and reward. The present subject requires the consideration of the first part only.

§ 5. The Psalm commences thus: "A Psalm of David. The Lord, or Jehovah, said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Here we have three distinct persons: first, Jehovah; secondly, the person whom Jehovah addresses "to sit at his right hand;" and thirdly, the Psalmist, who declares the decree of Jehovah concerning him whom he calls "*his Lord*." I need not to inform my dear Benjamin that the expression, "sit thou at my right hand," must be taken metaphorically. "God is a Spirit," and hath no corporeal parts; but he speaks after the manner of men, and in allusion to what is common among princes, to place those at *their right hand* whom they highly esteem and respect, and this is a high honor and dignity bestowed upon such persons. Thus, when Bathsheba entered the presence of king Solomon, he ascended the throne and caused her to be seated at his right

hand. 1 Kings, 2 : 19. Whoever, therefore, the person be, it denotes dignity and pre-eminence above the highest rank of cherubim or seraphim; "for to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" The second part of the verse contains a promise, that whilst he is sitting at the right hand of Jehovah his enemies shall be subjugated.

The manner in which this is to be accomplished is expressed in the next two verses: "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." As soon as the Psalmist's Lord shall be seated at the right hand of Jehovah, his mighty rod, or *his word*, which is compared to a two edged sword, shall change the heart of his enemies and make them a willing people, and they shall exceed in number, as well as brightness and beauty, the spangles of early dew which the morning discloseth to the delighted eye of the beholder. But this person is to be a priest as well as a king upon his throne, as appears from the fourth verse: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

§ 6. Let us now inquire who was the penman or author of this Psalm. Some of our Rabbins would persuade us that it respects Abraham, and was addressed to him by Melchizedek, while others believe it was addressed to him by Eliezer. But this cannot be true. Abraham cannot be the subject of this Psalm; for when did Jehovah say unto him, "sit thou at my right hand?" Who were Abraham's enemies that should be subdued whilst he was sitting at the right hand of Jehovah? In what sense is the rod of Abraham to go forth from Zion, and produce such glorious effects as are mentioned verses two and three? or when did God swear to Abraham to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek? Nor could Melchizedek call Abraham *his* lord, seeing that

he was far superior to Abraham; for "it is evident that the lesser is blessed of the greater, and that the greater receiveth tythes from the lesser." Besides, Melchizedek was both king in Salem and a priest to the most high God, and consequently far superior to our father Abraham.

That king David was the author is evident, first, from the title, "Mizmor Ledavid," "a Psalm of David." I am aware that R. D. Kimchi hath found out that the prefix *le* to the word David signifies *to*, and not of, David, and that therefore the Psalm could not be composed by him: but this cannot be admitted, because it may not only very well signify a Psalm made *by* David; but if it do not, then there is no title which shows any Psalm to be his; and some of them we are sure are his. Besides, this very author makes David the author of Psalm 18th, where the title is, "*Leeved Jehovah Ledavid,*" i. e. a Psalm of David, the servant of Jehovah, where the prefix *le* is used twice, and should therefore be rendered by this author, a Psalm *to* David, *to* the servant of Jehovah. Again, in the Targum also, it is ascribed to David in these words: "a Psalm by the hand of David."

In the next place, it is evident that David was considered the author of this Psalm in the days of our blessed Savior and his apostles; for when Christ asserted that David in *spirit* called the Messiah *Lord*, they did not attempt to contradict that David was the author of the Psalm. The apostle Paul, who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and must have known to whom they applied this Psalm, declares David to have been the author.

§ 7. I will now show that the prediction of this Psalm respects the Messiah. We have already proved that it could not belong to Abraham; no more is it applicable to David. He being the author of the Psalm, could not be the subject of it; for he speaks of another, whom he calls his Lord. Nor hath he ascended into heaven, or sat down at the right hand of God. Nor was he a priest, *being* of the tribe of Judah. I well remember that a late author, one of our

brethren, calls this Psalm a mere parody on David, composed by one of the Levitic poets; and to get over the difficulty that David was no priest, he translates the word *Cohen* a priest, verse 4th, a "chief ruler." Mr. Bennet however produces no proof that this Psalm was written by a Levitic poet, though the title ascribes it to David. Nor can Mr. B. be ignorant that though the word is used in a civil sense to express some dignity, yet it nowhere signifies a *ruler*, much less a *king*; and that its radical and real signification is "a sacrifice," or as the Targums well translate it, by "Mesham-mesh," i. e. one that ministers before the Lord. And the first time the word is used in the Bible, it is used in this sense. Gen. 14: 18, And Melchizedek, the *priest* of the most high God. Mr. Bennet, however, should have given the credit of this *new translation* to the Targum, who substitutes the word "*Rabba*, a prince," for the word *Cohen*, a priest. But it was very evident that *this* Targum was composed more than 300 years after the death of Christ, when our Rabbins had begun to use every method in their power to give to every passage of Scripture, favorable to Christianity, a turn different from what it had before the coming of Christ.

That our ancient Rabbins applied this Psalm to the Messiah, will be evident to any one who will examine the following references: Raya Mehimna, Zohar. Gen. 18: 1. Num. 99: 2. Med. Tehillim in loco, and in Ps. 18: 35. R. Obadiah and Kimchi in loco. R. Saadiah Gaon, Dan. 7: 13. Nachmonides, disp. cum. frat. Paulo, page 36: 55. R. Yodem, Ps. 18: 36. R. Moshe haddarshan, in Ber. Rab. Gen. 18: 1. The author of Arkoth Rochel saith, "Armilus shall stir up all the world to war against the Messiah, whom the holy God shall not compel to war, but shall only say unto him, *sit thou at my right hand.*"

It is equally evident that the Pharisees and Scribes, in our Lord's time, considered the Messiah the subject of this Psalm. For when he asked them, "what think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" they readily replied, "the son of David,"

but when Jesus objected, "how then does David in spirit call him Lord?" saying, "the Lord said unto my Lord." "If then David call him *Lord*, how is he his son?"* They were non-plussed, and thrown into the utmost confusion; for, no man was able to answer him a word." Matt. 22 : 42, 46. Now, had it been the generally received opinion of the synagogue, at that time, that this Psalm was to be understood of some other person, and not of the Messiah, they could very easily have objected it to him; but Jesus seems to argue with them from what was agreed on, on all hands, and of which there could be no dispute among them, viz. that this Psalm was written by David, that it was written by him under the inspiration of the Spirit; and that the Messiah was the subject thereof.

§ 8. Before I leave this subject, I cannot but notice the opinion advanced by one of our people, a correspondent in the Jewish Repository, vol. 2, under the signature of S. M. In page 150 he saith, "this Psalm was wrote by Abner, Saul's general, when he united Israel under king David's dominion." Being called upon for a proof of his assertion, he saith in his next letter, page 252, "I do not bring ancient Rabbinical proof," (the reason is, it is impossible to do so,) "but one of a later date, say in the year 1720, from a work printed in London, entitled '*Espego Fiel de Vidas*;' its author is named *Daniel Israel Lopes Laguna*." With respect to the 110th Psalm, he saith, "this Psalm was addressed by Abner to king David, &c." The following observation, made by the editors in page 253, is an unanswerable refutation of this novel opinion of Mr. Lopes Laguna: "Does S. M. really think that the *mere assertion* of a writer in the year 1720 is entitled to be received as *proof* in such a case?"

* Note. It is worthy of observation that our Lord did not ask this question to prove his simple divinity, but rather the *union* of the divine and human natures in the person of the Messiah. As God, he could not be David's son, and, as man, he could not be his lord; but in the union of their natures, he is both his son and his lord.

If this writer has given any ancient authority for the assertion, why has S. M. been wholly silent respecting it? If S. M. be not acquainted with any ancient authority in support of it, how does he venture to say that such 'authority' has been 'obtained?' Is Don Lopes Laguna's having been 'acknowledged to be a man of profound learning,' sufficient to 'authenticate' every thing he may have affirmed? Do not the just rules of argument require the affirmative to be proved? Is not the necessity of proof so much the greater in proportion as the affirmation is at variance with the testimony of antiquity on the point in question? Is it any better than trifling to advance an assertion, and then say, 'it remains now for' an opponent '*to disprove*' it. Has S. M. *disproved* the ancient authorities which declare this Psalm to have been written by David? Suppose any writer of the present day, 'acknowledged to be a man of profound learning,' should assert this Psalm to have been written by Daniel, and to have related to Cyrus, would S. M. admit such an assertion to be worthy of credit? If not, on what grounds would he reject it, that would not equally invalidate the assertion of Don Lopes? Would it be argued that this Psalm is not all applicable to Cyrus? But is it all applicable to David? Was David a priest—a priest for ever? Is the interpretation given by S. M. (that this language 'only indicates that the dominion of Israel shall for ever be in the house of David,') so self-evident as to require nothing to be said in support of it? And if such be the meaning of this language, *how* does S. M. suppose the *prediction* to have been fulfilled?

§ 9. Pardon this digression, dear Benjamin. To return to our subject. The priestly office may be divided into three prominent parts—to offer sacrifices, to make intercession, and to bless the people. As the soul and essence of the priesthood consisted in offering up sacrifices, this may be the proper place to show their *origin and design*.

Sacrificing is a religious act, in which a creature devoted

to God was in a solemn manner destroyed in his presence, for sacred ends. "A sacrifice," saith the great and learned Dr. Owen, "is a religious oblation of something consecrated and dedicated to God by the ministry of a priest, according to God's institution, to be destroyed for a testimony of the worship of God, and an external symbol." This mode of worship is of great antiquity. It was in use in the first ages of the world. We are sure that Job offered sacrifices, both for his children and for his friends. Our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built altars and offered their sacrifices unto the God most high. Noah offered up sacrifices immediately on his coming out of the ark. Cain and Abel brought their respective offerings unto the Lord; and from the manner in which the transaction is introduced, it seems pretty clear that there was a *regular fixed time* for this religious exercise. The expression alluded to is in Gen. 4 : 3, "and in the process of time it came to pass." The original is, "and it came to pass at the *end* of days." This intimates (as has been observed) a *stated* time for the performance of this duty; and the whole turn of the phrase marking a previous and familiar observance. Nor can it reasonably be doubted that Adam himself offered up sacrifices. For whence came the *skins* with which our first parents were clothed? Gen. 3 : 21. The beasts to whom they belonged cannot, so soon after their creation, be supposed to have died of age; they must have been slain; and as animal food was not in use until after the flood, it is most natural to suppose that they were slain in sacrifice, as a constant memorial of their transgression, of the death which it merited, and of the divine mercy by which that death was withheld.

§ 10. It is a remark of the pious and learned Dr. Witsius, "that God's clothing our first parents was a symbolical act, as seems evident from our Lord's own words, 'I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear,' Rev. 3 : 18. The mystical is first, As that clothing which

Adam contrived for himself could not cover him so as to appear before the eyes of God ; in like manner, nothing that a sinner can work or toil by his own industry, or wisdom, falsely so called, can produce any thing that can procure him a just and well grounded confidence by which he may appear before the tribunal of God. ' Their webs, which are spiders' webs, shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works.' Isa. 59 : 5, 6.

" Secondly, As the bodies of our first parents were covered with the spoils of mortality, and the skins of slain animals, so the garment of grace, whereby the body of sin is covered, is owing to the very death of Christ, without which, that righteousness which makes us acceptable to God, could not have been performed." I would further observe, that as the slaying of the animal exhibited the suffering and death of the Messiah, so its acceptance was an assurance of the acceptance of the sacrifice of the Savior ; and the clothing of our first parents with the skins of the sacrifice, pointed out the righteousness of Messiah, brought in when he was " cut off, but not for himself." Dan. 9 : 24, 26.

That Adam had been in the habit of offering up sacrifices, has been the general opinion of our Rabbins. See Targum and Rashi on Ps. 69 : 32. Maimonides Mishn. book 8. treat. on the temple, chap. 2. sec. 2.

Farewell.

Behold the bleeding Lamb of God,
Our spotless sacrifice !
By hands of barb'rous sinners seiz'd,
Nail'd to the cross, he dies.

Blest Jesus, whence his streaming blood ?
And whence this foul disgrace ?
Whence all these pointed thorns, that rend
Thy venerable face ?

" I sanctify myself (he cries)

" That thou may'st holy be :

" Come, trace my life ; come, view my death :

" And learn to copy me."

Letter XI.**THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.**

Dear Brother,

§ 1. Having in my last letter traced the practice of sacrifices to the family and person of Adam, I will now endeavor to show the divine authority for their conduct. I am perfectly aware, my dear Benjamin, that it has been a subject of great controversy, whether sacrifices are a *human invention* or a *divine institution*, yet, after a long and close examination of the arguments on both sides of the question, I am fully satisfied that sacrifices were appointed by God himself, and that immediately after the giving forth of the first promise of a Messiah. In favor of this opinion many divines have argued and written well, but, in my humble opinion, Dr. Magee, in his invaluable work on the atonement, has demonstrated it in the clearest and most convincing manner; and to this work I freely acknowledge myself indebted for many of the ideas I now wish to impress upon the mind of my dear Benjamin.

That sacrifices are not a human invention, will appear from the following considerations:

§ 2. No satisfactory reason can be given for their origin or design. Some of the enemies of "Jehovah and his anointed" have triumphed in their imagined discovery that sacrifices are the invention of "priest-craft," for the purpose of "sharing with their gods, and reserving the *best bits* for themselves." But these *honest* men have *craftily* omitted to tell us who those priests were, before the institution of the Aaronic priesthood, when the head of each family, &c. &c. offered up his *own* sacrifices. Was it *gain*

to Job and all the patriarchs, to burn their animals to ashes for the sake of getting the *best bits*, namely, the *skin*? Was not this their own before the rest was wasted? Such, however, is the superior sagacity of Mr. Morgan, Tintal, &c. &c. for the purpose of making the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God of none effect. "Such impotent cavils," saith the learned Dr. Magee, "contemptible as they are, may yet be considered of value in this light; they imply an admission, that the invention of sacrifice on principles of natural reason is utterly inconceivable; since, if any such principles could be pointed out, these writers, whose main object is to undermine the fabric of revelation, would gladly have resorted to them, in preference to suppositions so frivolous and absurd." vol. 2. p. 92.

§ 3. Others, somewhat more sober and serious, would have us to believe that they were originated by the light of nature, as expressions of gratitude. They tell us "that sacrifices are sacred gifts of things first received from God, and presented back to him for an external expression of gratitude, an acknowledgment of faith and every pious sentiment." To this it has been justly remarked, "if any have referred it to the laws of nature, their error is easily proved from this fact, that the sacrificial rites practiced by the ancients, have been wholly abolished by Christ among his followers; though he was far from abolishing any of the laws of nature, but by his authority ratified, confirmed, and established them all." Outram. De. Sacrif. 22. Besides, "no being has a right to the lives of other beings, but the Creator, or those on whom he confers that right." It could therefore not have entered the mind of Noah or Abel to slay animals, the grant of animal food being not given till after the flood; nor would God have accepted of such an offering.

§ 4. Dr. Spencer and others maintain that sacrifices were originally considered under the notion of gifts, the effects of which in appeasing the anger and conciliating the favor of

man being observed, it was supposed they would have the like effect with God, and thereupon was invented the rite of sacrificing. But if Cain and Abel sacrificed upon this principle, it will be hard to account for God's accepting the one and rejecting the other. Besides, the opinion that sacrifices would prevail with God, must proceed from an observation that gifts had prevailed with men—an observation which Cain and Abel had little opportunity of making. Nor could gifts have been in use before property was established, which was not probably the case in the days of Cain and Abel.

§ 5. Others, again, suppose that sacrifices were originally used as a *federal rite*, i. e. a kind of eating and drinking with God, as it were, at his table, and thereby implying the restoration to a state of friendship with him by *repentance* and confession of sin. But this could not have been the case; for animal food was not in use before the flood, as has been fully proved by Dr. Magee and others.

§ 6. The more generally received opinion is, that the practice of sacrificing is a religious act of worship, especially as an acknowledgment of contrition for sin, strongly expressed by the death of the animal, representing *that* death which the offerer confessed to be his own desert. This has been the most prevailing motive and design of sacrifices among nations and ages the most remote. Dr. Magee has proved, at considerable length, "that all nations, Jews and heathens, before the time of Christ, entertained the notion that the displeasure of the offended Deity was to be averted by the sacrifice of an animal; and that to the shedding of its blood they imputed their pardon and reconciliation." vol. ii. 159.

Hence the *kind* of sacrifices which they considered the most valuable, and which they offered the most frequent, was that of animals, slain and burned. Until the giving of the law no other offering than that of animals is recorded in the Scriptures, except that of Cain, and that was rejected.

Does not this indicate that they knew that without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sin?

But this proves that sacrifices could not be a human invention, for,

§ 7. 1. It is contrary to reason. What man of common understanding could suppose that an infinitely good and benevolent Being would be pleased with the fumes and reekings of the bleeding sacrifices? "Does he eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?" Ps. 50: 13. Would they not rather have chosen a "*reasonable service*" for the God that made them reasonable creatures? such as the sacrifice of prayer and of praise, of a pure mind and of a good life. Such, indeed, the wiser heathens did, in their opinions, exceedingly prefer. Pythagoras and Plato spoke often with regret and displeasure of the sacrifices and blood of beasts. Others wondered how the practice came first into the world. With respect to the *expiatory* sacrifices, who could think that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin, and that God would accept of that as a fit compensation for their crimes? It is most unreasonable to suppose any natural connection between the slaying of an animal and the receiving of pardon for the violation of God's holy laws. Will the insulted and violated law of a country be magnified and honored by hanging or executing a dog in the place of a robber or murderer? It is therefore highly unreasonable to suppose that those holy and pious patriarchs, who lived by faith and walked with God, should think the offering of the blood and burning of the flesh of a beast to be fit expressions of their gratitude to almighty God, or means to obtain his favor by way of expiation for their sins, without his institution?

§ 8. 2. In the next place, if sacrifices had been a human invention, it would have been *will-worship*, and therefore highly displeasing in the sight of God. Lev. 10: 12. Isa. 29: 13. Matt. 15: 19. The Old Testament saints would never have ventured to express their devotion in such a

strange manner, if they had not been required to do so by the declared will of God. But even suppose that the patriarchs had been so presumptuous as to invent or practice such bloody rites, it can never be admitted that God, who has, upon all occasions, testified his displeasure against the inventions of men in his worship, would have smiled upon such self-devised modes of adoration. Instead of testifying of their gifts, and accepting their burnt offerings, as he has done, would he not rather have upbraided them in the words of that well known reproof, "Who hath required these at your hands?" Isa. 1 : 12.

§ 9. What has been said to prove the divine authority of sacrifices, is summarily contained in the following extract : "Whatever practice hath obtained universally in the world, must have obtained from some dictate of *reason*, or some demand of *nature*, or some principle of *interest*, or else from some powerful influence or injunction of some being of *universal authority*. Now, the practice of animal sacrifice did not obtain from *reason* ; for no reasonable notions of God could teach men that he could delight in blood, or in the fat of slain beasts. Nor will any man say that we have any natural instinct to gratify in spilling the blood of an innocent creature. Nor could there be any temptation from appetite to do this in those ages when the whole sacrifice was consumed by fire ; or when, if it was not, yet men wholly abstained from flesh ; and consequently this practice did not owe its origin to any principle of *interest*. Nay, so far from any thing of this, that the destruction of innocent and useful creatures is evidently *against nature*, *against reason*, and *against interest* ; and therefore must be founded in an *authority* whose influence was as powerful as the practice was universal ; and that could be none but the authority of God, the Sovereign of the world ; or of Adam, the founder of the human race. If it be said of Adam, the question still remains, what motive determined *him* to the practice ? It could not be nature, reason, or interest, as has

been already shown; it must therefore have been the authority of his sovereign; and had Adam enjoined it on his posterity, it is not to be imagined that they would have obeyed him in so extraordinary and expensive a rite, from any other motive than the command of God." Delaney Rev. Exam. Diss. 8. p. 85.

I hope, my dear brother, what has already been stated will convince you that sacrifices are a divine institution, and not a human invention. Allow me, however, to confirm this all-important proposition by one or two more remarks.

§ 10. 1. Let us for a moment consider what is said in sacred writ concerning the sacrifice of Cain and Abel. Moses, our inspired historian, gives us the following account. "And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect." Gen. 4 : 2-6. From this brief account it appears that both Cain and Abel brought their offerings unto the Lord; that each offered of that which he had, according to his occupation; and that the sacrifice of Abel was accepted, but that of Cain was rejected. Now, as the actions of both brothers seem to have been the same, why the Lord should have accepted the one and rejected the other, no satisfactory reason can be given by those who deny the divine authority of sacrifices; for, as it has been observed, if sacrifices be considered as *gifts*, or as *federal rites*, or as *symbolical actions* expressing the dispositions and sentiment of the offerer, or in any way that human invention can be conceived to have devised them; the actions of the two brothers appear to stand precisely on the same ground, each bringing an offering of that which he respectively possessed, and each thus manifesting his acknowledgment and worship of the great Author of his possession.

But on the supposition that sacrifices were appointed by God, every difficulty vanishes, and all appears connected and satisfactory. We have already stated that it is more than probable that, immediately at the giving of the promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent," sacrifices were instituted to represent, by their death, the sufferings and death of the Messiah. Now, Abel, believing the *design* as well as the divine appointment of the institution, brought an *animal* sacrifice, which was accepted; but Cain, although performing the same act, but changing the *matter* and consequently disregarded the design, had his sacrifice rejected.

§ 11. Hence the inspired apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. 11: v. 4, informs us that the ground on which Abel's oblation was preferred to that of Cain was, that Abel offered his in *faith*; and the criterion of this faith also appears to have been, in the opinion of this writer, the *animal* sacrifice. His words are these, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," i. e. by faith Abel offered that which was of the true nature of sacrifice. Now, as the same apostle teaches us "that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom, 10: 11, it is evident that Abel must have been acquainted with the nature and design of the institution of sacrifices, for without some assurance held as the object of faith, he could not have exercised this virtue; and without some peculiar mode of sacrifice enjoined, he could not have exemplified that faith by an appropriate offering. In opposition to those who consider sacrifices the effect of natural reason, it has been observed, "that the light of natural reason does not generate *faith*, but science; and when it fails of that, its offspring is absurdity. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,' and comes not by reasoning, but by hearing. What things then were they of which Abel had heard, for which he hoped, and in the faith of which he offered sacrifice? Undoubtedly it was a restoration to that

immortality which was forfeited by the transgression of his parents. Of such redemption, an obscure intimation had been given to Adam, in the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent; and it was doubtless to impress upon his mind, in more striking colors, the manner in which this was to be done, that bloody sacrifices were first instituted." *Ency. Brit. Art. Sacris.*

§ 12. The diversity in the oblations of Cain and Abel, and their different reception, have been finely illustrated by a comparison with the parable in which our Lord represents the different devotions of a Pharisee and Publican, and their different successes. Abel, who, by sacrificing an animal, acknowledged his true character as a sinner, and evinced his faith and hope in the divine mercy by the appointed way of seeking forgiveness,—was accepted: while Cain, who contented himself with a eucharistic offering, and acknowledging his obligations as a creature, but regardless of his condition as a sinner, and neglecting the instituted means of seeking the divine mercy,—was rejected. So the Publican, with his confession of guilt, and supplication for pardon, "went down to his house justified, rather than" the Pharisee, with his fastings, and tithes, and thanksgiving.

§ 13. 2. That sacrifices are a divine institution, may be further argued from the distinction of clean and unclean animals being known before the flood. The first time we read of this distinction is in Gen. 7: 2, where God commanded Noah, saying, "of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean, by two, the male and his female." Under the Mosaic dispensation there were two kinds of clean and unclean beasts. Some were clean for men to eat, mentioned, Lev. 11: 3, 4, and some were clean for sacrifice to God, Lev. 1: 2, 10, 14. Now, as it appears from Gen. 9: 3, that all beasts *without* distinction were allowed for food, the distinction mentioned in Gen. 7: 2, must therefore refer to sacrifices. Hence we read, that as soon as Noah came out of the ark he "build-

ed an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar, and the Lord smelled a sweet savor ;" and as there is nothing in nature that constitutes this distinction, which depends wholly on the pleasure of Jehovah, it must require an express revelation. But in the command given unto Noah (Gen. 7 : 2) no characteristics are mentioned to distinguish one from the other ; it follows, hence, that he was well acquainted, not only with the duty of sacrificing as a religious rite divinely instituted, but also with their nature, properties, and design.

§ 14. And now, my beloved Benjamin, having thus endeavored to prove that sacrifices are a divine institution, and coeval with the first promise of a Messiah, I should now proceed to point out their original *design* ; but as this letter has already exceeded the usual limits, I will close it in the words of that eminent divine whose name has already frequently been mentioned : " It is obvious that the promise made to our first parents conveyed an intimation of some future deliverer, who should overcome the tempter that had drawn man from his innocence, and remove those evils which had been occasioned by the fall. This assurance, without which, or some other ground of hope, it seems difficult to conceive how the principle of religion could have had place among men, became to our first parents the grand object of faith. To perpetuate this fundamental article of religious belief among the descendants of Adam, some striking memorial of the fall of man and of the promised deliverance would naturally be appointed. What memorial could be devised more apposite than that of animal sacrifice ?—exemplifying, by the slaying of the victim, the death which has been denounced against man's disobedience ; thus exhibiting the awful lesson of that death which was the wages of sin, and at the same time representing that death which was actually to be undergone by the Redeemer of mankind ; and hereby connecting, in one view, the two great

cardinal events in the history of man, the *fall* and the *recovery*—the death denounced against sin, and the death appointed for that holy One who was to lay down his life to deliver man from the consequences of sin. The institution of animal sacrifice seems, then, to have been peculiarly significant, as containing all the elements of religious knowledge; and the adoption of this rite, with sincere and pious feelings, would at the same time imply an humble sense of the unworthiness of the offerer, a confession that the death inflicted on the victim was the desert of those sins which had arisen from man's transgression, and a full reliance upon the promises of deliverance, joined to an acquiescence in the means appointed for its accomplishment." Magee, I. 53. Now unto the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, be all honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen. Farewell.

Letter XII.

DESIGN OF SACRIFICES.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. Agreeably to promise, we proceed to point out the design of the institution of sacrifices. It may be necessary to distinguish between their original institution, and their re-appointment under the Levitical priesthood.

With respect to the former I would observe, in addition to what has already been hinted in the last letter, viz. that it was calculated, 1. To teach our first parents the nature of death. They had been threatened with death; but what

notion could they have of dying? they had never felt the cold hand of death nor witnessed the agonies of expiring nature; but to behold the struggles of the dying victim was calculated to excite and preserve in their minds a lively sense of what was meant by death, and what they had to expect for their transgression.

§ 2. 2. To illustrate the nature of the death of "the seed of the woman," by which we were to be reconciled unto God. As it was not designed by God that the Messiah should suffer and die before the lapse of several thousand years after the promise was made, there is nothing more natural than to suppose that the institution of sacrifices was ordained by God, as a *sign* and *representation*, to be observed in faith and expectation of the death and sacrifice of the *promised* Savior, as we now celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's supper in *remembrance* of that death and sacrifice *already* past.

3. To seal the promise to Adam, and confirm the new covenant with him, as he did afterward to Noah, to Abraham, and others, by accepting their sacrifice. The learned and pious Dr. Eusebius, having deduced from the Scripture account of the sacrifices of Abel, Noah, and Abraham, and from the sacrificial institution by Moses, the fact of a divine appointment of sacrifices, proceeds to explain the nature and true intent of the rite in the following manner: "Whilst men had no victim that was more excellent, more precious, and more worthy of God, animals were made the price and ransom of their souls; and their substituting these animals in their own room, bore, indeed, some affinity to their suffering themselves, in which sense all the ancient worshippers and friends of God made use of them. The Holy Spirit had taught them that there should one day come a *victim*, more venerable, more holy, and more worthy of God. He had likewise instructed them how to point him out to the world by types and shadows. And thus they became prophets, and were not ignorant of their having been

chosen out to represent to mankind the things which God resolved to accomplish." Eus. Dem. Evang. L. I. cap. 10. p. 36.

§ 3. Dr. Owen, in his elaborate and invaluable exertations, prefixed to his exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, having described the nature of the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, says, "When God came to reveal this *counsel* of his will, this branch and part of the eternal compact between him and his Son, and to represent unto the church what had been transacted within the veil, for their faith and edification, as also to give them some previous insight into the manner of the accomplishment of these his holy counsels, he did it by the institutions of a *priesthood* and *sacrifices*, or a sacred office and sacred kind of worship, united and adapted to be a resemblance of this heavenly transaction between the Father and the Son. For the *priesthood* and *sacrifices* of the law were not the *original* exemplar of these things, but a *transcript* and *copy* of what was done in heaven itself, in *counsel*, *design* and *covenant*, as they were a type of what should be afterward accomplished on the earth. Now although the names of priest and sacrifice are first applied unto the office mentioned under the law and their work, from whence they are traduced under the New Testament, and transferred unto Jesus Christ, that we may learn thereby what God, of old, instructed his church in; yet the things themselves intended and signified by these names, belong *properly* and *firstly* unto Jesus Christ, upon the account of this his undertaking, and the very names of *priests* and *sacrifices* were but *improperly* ascribed unto them who were so called, to be obscure representations of what was past, and types of what was to come." This tradition of sacrifices was handed down to all nations of the world, but the knowledge of their design was lost.

§ 4. I close this part of the subject with a short but striking quotation from the interesting sermons of Dr. Randolph: "From those who presumptuously deride the doctrine of atonement, we would ask some reasonable solution of the

origin of sacrifice. Will they make it consistent with and natural idea, will they discover in the blood of an innocent victim, any thing recommendatory in itself of the offerer's suit and devotions? Though they should clear away what they term a load of superstition from the Christian worship, they will find it encumbering every altar of their favorite natural religion; they will find these absurdities forming the significant and generally indispensable part of all religious ceremonies; and however disgraced, as we are ready to allow, with every abominable pollution; though retaining nothing to perfect the service, or to purify the offering, still, in its expiatory form, in its propitiatory hopes, the sacrifice of heathen nations preserves the features of that sacred and solemn office, which was ordained to keep up the remembrance of guilt till the full and perfect sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction was made by an eternal Mediator, for the sins of the whole world."

§ 5. I proceed to show the design of the *re-appointment* of sacrifices under the Levitical priesthood. Were it my intention to point out the design of the *whole* Mosaic dispensation, (as I hope to do, if life be spared,) I might easily show that it was the effect of infinite wisdom, love and grace; that all the ceremonial laws were serviceable to try the obedience of our nation, to restrain them from idolatry; that they were suitable to their then present condition; full of instruction as images and types of spiritual things, representing and pointing out the Messiah with all his blessed undertakings, and the unspeakable benefits which accrue to us from thence. But this would lead us too far from the subject under consideration. I shall therefore confine myself to that part of the Mosaic dispensation which relates more particularly to the priesthood of the Messiah.

To represent this all-important subject in as clear a light as possible, it will be necessary to show,

§ 6. First, that sacrifices were reappointed to make atonement. This was the case with most of them, but especially

with the daily lambs, the sin, trespass and burnt offerings, and the two goats on the annual day of atonement. That these are piacular and vicarious, i. e. *substituted* in the place of the *guilty*, to make atonement, i. e. to remove the wrath of God, and to procure the pardon of sin, and to restore to his favor, will appear,

§ 7. 1. From sacred Scripture. In the following passages sacrifices are expressly said to make atonement, and procure the pardon of sin: see Levit. 4 : 20, 26, 31, 35 ; 5 : 10, 13, 16, 18. c. 7 : 19–22. Numb. 15 : 25, 26, 28. The Hebrew word *Copher*, translated atonement, is from the root *Caphar*, which signifies to *cover over*; it intimates that our offences are, by a proper atonement, covered from the avenging justice of God; that the penalty of the transgression is remitted, and the offender restored to the privileges which he had forfeited. See the following passages: Ex. 32 : 30–32. Numb. 16 : 46, 48 ; 25 : 11, 13. Hence the pardon of sin is expressed by its being covered, and the punishment by its not being covered; Ps. 32 : 1 ; 85 : 2; Neh. 4 : 45. This word *Caphar* in Pail signifies to remove or take away, and consequently to be propitious and merciful in taking away of sin, as also to appease, atone, reconcile, and purge, whereby sin is taken away. See particularly the following passages: Gen. 32 : 20. Deut. 28 : 8. Ps. 65 : 3 ; 78 : 38 ; 79 : 9. Prov. 16 : 14. Hence you know, my dear Benjamin, that the tenth day of the seventh month is called *Yom Kippurim*, i. e. day of atonement or expiations; because of the extraordinary expiatory sacrifices offered therein. On this account also, the *lid* which covered the ark containing the two tables of the law, or ten commandments, was called *Caphporeth*, i. e. a mercy-seat, or propitiatory, as fitly signifying the effects of God's mercy to transgressors of his law. Here the effect is put for the cause. The expiatory and atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, by which justice is satisfied, and sin, as it were, hid from the sight of Jehovah, hath opened a way for the free

exercise of mercy toward guilty sinners. And hence the seventy have translated the Hebrew word *Caphporeth*, by one which signifies *to appear*, to make propitiation.

§ 8. It further appears that sacrifices were vicarious, or substituted in the place of the guilty, from the ceremony of the offender laying his hands on the head of the victim, either *personally* or *representatively*. See Lev. 1: 4. 4: 14, 15. 24: 29; especially Lev. 16: 21, 22, where the high priest, on the great day of atonement, was to "lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and *confess* over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins *putting them on the head of the goat*." Nothing can be plainer than that by this action was manifested a transferring of sin from the offender to the sacrifice, and of the death due to the criminal to the innocent victim. Hence the blood of the animal was the expiation of the sin of the soul of the offender. Lev. 17. 11, 14. Hence the sacrifices are said to *bear* the iniquities of the people, because the guilt and punishment of the sinner was transferred to them. Lev. 10: 17. 16: 22. Upon this principle of imputation, and upon this principle only, we can explain why both the messenger, that only went with the scape-goat into the wilderness, and he that burned the residue of the bullock, whose blood had been carried into the holy of holies, were counted so unclean that they were not admitted into the congregation before they were purified and washed. Lev. 16: 26. 27: 28. Dr. Jamieson, speaking of the ceremony of laying on of the hands, says, "This rite was unworthy of the divine institution and of man's observance, except as typifying that great act of God's justice in laying upon Christ the iniquities of all his people, and the exercise of their faith in cordially assenting to this act and embracing him as their only surety."

§ 9. 2. From the almost unanimous opinion of our nation. You well know, my dear Benjamin, that all our Rabbins maintain the total inefficacy of a sacrifice to obtain the par-

don of sin, unless the person who offered it added his confessions and supplications to the laying on of hands. See Abarbanel, Lev. 16. R. Abuav. Aben Ezra, and R. M. B. Nachman, on Lev. 5 : 5. Maimonides Teshuva, C. 1. The form of deprecation for any sinner offering a piacular sacrifice is given at length by Maimonides, in Maasé Korban, ch. 3. The concluding words, which are, "But now I repent, and let *this* be my expiation," evidently referred to the animal placed under his hands, and signified (as our Rabbins justly observe) "Let this victim be substituted in my place, that the evil which I have deserved may fall on the head of my sacrifice." R. Levi ben Gerson, in his commentary on Lev. ch. 1, says, "The imposition of hands was a tacit declaration on the part of every offerer that he removed his sins from himself and transferred them to that animal." To the same purpose is the language of R. Isaac ben Arama, Lev. ch. 4 : "Whenever any one sins through ignorance, or even with knowledge, he transfers his sins from himself, and lays them upon the head of his victim." The same sentiment is expressed by Maimonides, Moré Nevoch, p. III, c. 47, and by many others which might be quoted, ~~but~~ those mentioned are already more than necessary as it regards my dear Benjamin; but as there are not a few, who call themselves Christians, who not only deny the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, but also boldly affirm "that the Jews never did, nor do at present, believe in the vicarious nature of sacrifices," I will beg your indulgence whilst I notice two or three testimonies that they *did*, and still *do*, consider the sacrifices as the *substitute*, the *ransom*, the *expiation* for their sins.

§ 10. R. M. B. Nachman, speaking of the burnt offering, saith, "It was just that his blood should be shed, and that his body should be burned; but the Creator, of his mercy, accepted this victim from him as his *substitute* and *ransom*. that the blood of the animal might be shed *instead* of his blood; that is, that the life of the animal might be given

for his life." Com. on Lev. ch. 1. Rabbi Eechai, on Lev. ch. 1, saith, "Whereas the sinner himself deserved that his blood should be shed, as the blood of the victim was, and that his body should be burned, as the carcass of the victim was; and God, to whom be praise, accepted this victim as his *substitute* and *ransom*. See how great was the kindness of God toward him! God, of his infinite mercy and goodness, for the sinner's *expiation*, accepted the life of a brute *instead* of his life. This sentence is true, and agreeable to reason." R. Isaac Abarbinel saith, "The offerer deserved that his blood should be shed and his body burned for his sin; but God in mercy accepted this victim as his *substitute* and *ransom*; and the blood of the animal was shed *instead* of his blood—the life of the animal was sacrificed *instead* of his life." Praef. Lev. See also R. Isaac Ben Arama, on Lev. David de Pomis, in voce Olah. See also R. S. Yarchi; Aben Ezra; R. M. B. Nachman; R. Isaac Ben Arama; and R. J. Abarbinel, on Lev. ch. 17, v. 11.

§ 11. That the sentiment contained in the preceding quotations is still believed by our nation, is evident from the prayer which they repeat, whilst they are turning or swinging a fowl three times round their head, before it is killed, on the day of preparation for the annual day of atonement. The prayer, as you know, is as follows: "Se chalipathi, se tacht, se caphparathi, se Hattarnegol yelech lamitha waani ailech lechayim tovim im col yisrael. Amen. i. e. This fowl (cock) is my exchange or ransom, this is in my stead, this is my expiation, this cock shall go unto death, but I shall go to a happy life with all Israel. Amen."

§ 12. Dear brother, whilst I am relating this *religious* act performed by our people with the greatest solemnity, my heart is grieved within me, and I am compelled to exclaim with the prophet, Jer. 9: 1–3. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people; for they bend their tongues like their bows for *lies*; but

they are not valiant for the *truth* upon the earth." May not Jehovah say to them as he did to our fathers, "Who has required these things of your hands?" and again, "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the *precept of men*." Gladly, dear Benjamin, would I have concealed this superstitious worship, were it not to show that, notwithstanding the infidelity of some of our brethren, the nation, as a body, still believe that sacrifices were of a vicarious nature, and that repentance must be accompanied by the death of the substitute. By this transaction another important truth is confirmed, namely, the doctrine of original sin. You know, dear Benjamin, that our Rabbins have taught that a male is to take a *cock*, and a female a *hen*, but that a woman with child must have both a cock and a hen, for the purpose, that if the infant in the womb be a female, the hen might atone both for the mother and child, but if a male, atonement is made for the child by the cock. If the unborn infant needs an atonement, it must certainly be considered a sinner.

§ 13. To conclude, from these few quotations, selected out of *many*, the sentiment of our Rabbins, with respect to sacrifices, is, I trust, established beyond contradiction. It is evident that they have taught that the sins of the offender were transferred to his victim, and that he imprecated upon the victim the punishment due to himself. That they have maintained that those victims, whose blood was carried into the sanctuary, and whose carcasses were burned without the camp, were polluted by the sins of the guilty being transferred to them. That they have described every piacular sacrifice as the ransom, redemption and substitute of the sinner himself; and have asserted the life of every such victim to be given instead of the sinner's life. From sacred Scripture, and from the sentiment of our Rabbins, it appears therefore that my proposition is true, viz. that the Levitical sacrifices were instituted to make atonement for sin.

§ 14. Secondly. My next proposition is, that sacrifices could not make atonement. Although this proposition seems to be in direct opposition to the former, yet I hope to establish its truth, and afterwards show the consistency of both.

That sacrifices could *really* atone for, or purge the conscience from dead works, or be acceptable to the divine Majesty for their *own sake*, or any intrinsic value, is denied by reason and Scripture. Would it be consistent with the honor of God, to be contented with the blood of a beast for an expiation of sin? How could there be in it a discovery of the severity of his justice, the purity of his holiness and the grandeur of his grace? How could he have made known his infinite hatred of sin, if he had accepted the blood of an abject animal as an atonement for the sin of a spiritual and precious soul?

There is no proportion between them and the sins of men. The sin of a rational creature is too heinous to be expiated by the blood of an irrational creature. An inferior nature can never atone for the sin of a nature superior to it. Beside, the repetition of them shows their insufficiency. Had the wrath of God been appeased by them, why should the fire burn perpetually upon the altar?

§ 15. Their inability to atone for sin is declared in the Scriptures of the Old and New-Testament. In the prophet Mica, "rivers of oil, and thousands of rams," are denied to be an adequate propitiation, yea even the "first born" would not be accepted for transgression, nor "the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul." Micah, 6: 6, 7, and the apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. 10: 4, positively declares that it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.

Maimonides also observes that in the religious rites connected with sacrifices, there was nothing intrinsically acceptable to God, nothing with which he was pleased for its own sake. *More Nevoch*, p. 3, c. 32.

Thirdly. The Levitical sacrifices had a twofold design,

agreeably to the twofold relation in which our nation stood with God.

§ 16. 1. They stood in the common relation to God as sinners.

In this respect the Levitical sacrifices, like those originally instituted, neither could nor were designed to *expiate* their sins, but only to *typify* the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, and by faith in him who was to come, they realized the same benefits as those do who do now believe in him as having come. He was the original *idea* and *pattern* of them, and they were instituted as types of him who was the anti-type, a greater and better sacrifice, an oblation of a higher nature, which was to succeed and abrogate them for ever. An inspired apostle has assured us that the *whole* Levitical institution was typical. Col. 2: 17. Heb. 9: 10. Now, as sacrifices were the soul and life of that dispensation, so they were the most typical of the Messiah. This observation is confirmed by the following passages. John, 1: 29. 1 Cor. 5: 7. Heb. 7: 27. 10: 1. 1 Pet. 1: 19. Rev. 5: 6. 13: 8.

§ 17. "In the death of Christ," saith the pious Mr. Brown, "we see the great antitype of these legal oblations. Most certain they were public acknowledgments of guilt, and professions of faith in the grand propitiation which they believed should appear in the end of the world. Tell us, thou sweet singer of Israel, who is he that shall do for us what the law could not do! In the 40th Psalm, David, speaking not of himself, but of a far more glorious person, hath these most emphatical words: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo, I come to do thy will O God." It was not Christ who came to imitate the sacrifices, but they were ordained to prefigure him. They were the shadow of future good things, but the body is of Christ. When Christ was first revealed, the sacrifices seem to have been practiced, and when he died they ceased to be offered. The temple heard his dying groan, rent her vail in presence of the priest-

hood, as they offered the evening sacrifice and the paschal lamb. From this time forth shall your office be vacated, ye legal priests ! ye beasts of the field, no more shall ye smoke as victims on God's altar, for the merciful High-Priest hath now given *himself* an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor unto God ! Now, if with the prediction of his death they began, and ended with the accomplishment, what can be more plain than the relation betwixt them, as the shadow and the substance ? Set this relation aside, and it is impossible to vindicate, to any advantage, the original appointment of sacrifices, or to account for their abolition after they were enjoined."

§ 18. 2. They stood also in a political relation to God. He was the king of Israel, and they were his chosen subjects. In this relation God gave them peculiar laws, the obedience and disobedience of which was connected with temporal rewards and punishments, without any reference to future happiness or misery. In pity and compassion to his people, the Lord was pleased to enlarge the design as well as the variety of sacrifices. In addition to the original typical design, they were now appointed to make a real atonement or reconciliation, between the King of Israel and his peculiar people for certain sins, such as sins of ignorance, weakness, &c. The offended Sovereign was appeased, and the offender delivered from punishment, and restored to the performance of duties, and the enjoyment of privileges which were peculiar to the congregation of Israel. In reference to this two-fold relation of our nation, and the two-fold design and efficacy of sacrifices, the apostle remarks thus : " For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?" Heb. 9 : 13, 14.

Hence the seeming contradiction of the first and second proposition is reconciled. When the Levitical sacrifices are

said to make an atonement, it relates to the *political* state of the Jews; when it is asserted that they could not make an atonement, it relates to their *relation* to God as sinners.

Thus the sacrifices answered two important ends; they delivered immediately from temporal misery, and typically exhibited a spiritual Savior: like the brazen serpent which was lifted up as an immediate remedy for the wounded Israelites, and secondly, as a type of the Messiah "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John, 3: 14, 15. Hence, David, in his great and heinous sins of murder and adultery, flies to mere mercy, (Ps. 51: 16,) for God had appointed no sacrifice, for the expiation of such sins, as to the *political* guilt contracted in that commonwealth, though otherwise no sins or sinners were excluded from the *benefit* of sacrifices.

§ 19. I have now, my beloved brother Benjamin, endeavored, I hope, to your satisfaction, to show that the rite of sacrificing was practiced in the family of Adam, the father of the human race; that its origin was a divine command; that the sacrifice of the Messiah was both its pattern and its antitype; and that the Levitical sacrifices were merely re-appointed with a variety of laws and ceremonies, that besides their *typical* design, they might also make an atonement for the *political* sins of our nation. I should now proceed to show that it was *predicted* as well as *typified*, that the Messiah was to suffer and die as a vicarious sacrifice; but this I must defer to the next letter, and close the present by noticing a sentiment respecting the design of the Levitical sacrifices, which is as false and pernicious as it is general and common. Some of our famous Rabbins, such as Maimonides, R. L. B. Gerson, and Abarbanel, and some eminent Christian writers, such as Spencer, Grotius and others, are of opinion "that Moses indulged our fathers in the practice of sacrificing and other ceremonies, because they had become so violently attached to them that it would have been imprudent or dangerous to prohibit it. Nay, Sir Thomas

R. Blunt, in his *Essay*, p. 6. is bold and impious enough to say "that *God* enjoined the Jews the use of sacrifices because they had been used to this kind of worship in Egypt, and God had no other way to bring them off from their *idolatry* but this. Therefore he was forced to comply with them, and indulge them in this pagan folly." This is indeed "cutting the knot," and plucking up the tree of life by its very roots. At one stroke it denies the divine authority of sacrifices; it classes Moses, nay, Jehovah himself, among those wicked politicians, who say, "let us do evil that good may come out of it;" it makes the apostle a liar, for he saith that all things under the law were types and shadows of better things to come; it makes the death of the Messiah of none effect, and consequently it saps the only foundation of a sinner's hope.

But as this opinion has been unanswerably refuted by many divines, I shall make only two or three observations.

§ 20. 1. It is an undeniable fact, as has been already shown, that sacrifices were in use in the family of our first parents, before heathens were born, or idolatry practiced; and that after the flood, Noah, the father of the new world, offered up sacrifices as soon as he came out of the ark; and so the practice continued through the ages of the patriarchs, until they were re-appointed at the foot of Mount Sinai. Instead therefore of the Jews learning the practice of sacrificing from the Egyptians, it is evident that all nations learned it from the patriarchs, who had received it by divine command.

§ 21. 2. So far was Moses from commanding the Israelites to imitate the customs of the heathen, that they were expressly forbidden it, and that immediately after the re-appointment of sacrifices; "for the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall

ye not do ; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances." Lev. 18 : 1-3. Eccl. 7 : 29. Is it credible that a man in his senses, yea, a wise politician, nay, even the infinitely wise God, would express his abhorrence, and forbid the practices of the Gentiles, and yet at the same time appoint his people several rites which the *Gentiles* used, and that merely because they were *Gentile rites*, and practiced by the *idolatrous* nations ? Surely not. Further we observe,

§ 22. 3. So far was God from having accommodated the Mosaic institutions to the customs of the Gentiles, that it is evident that most, if not all, the Levitical ceremonies were in direct opposition to those in use among the heathens, and that for the purpose of keeping them a *distinct* people. Hence, as you well know, our Rabbins call the Mosaic rites *Seyak letorah*, i. e. a *hedge of the law* ; and hence the apostle saith, " Before faith came we were *kept* under the law, *shut up* unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." Gal. 3 : 23. Here the apostle compareth the ceremonial law to a *strict watch*, or military guard, by which our nation was kept from joining the idolatrous nations.

That the Mosaic rites and ceremonies were in direct opposition to the idolatrous rites of the Gentiles, has been fully shown by many writers, such as Selden, Hottinger, and others, chiefly, however, borrowed from Maimonides, More Nevoch. part 3. ch. 38, &c. This most learned and judicious of all our Rabbins observed, " that God commanded our people to kill and sacrifice those animals which the *Egyptians* chiefly held as sacred, that they might not take them for gods." This hath also been noticed by *Gentile historians*. Thus *Diodorus Siculus* saith, " that Moses commanded the rites of sacrificing, and the manner of the *Jews'* lives, to differ much from the way and usage of other nations." Eclog. and *Tacitus* speaking of our lawgiver, saith " that the *Jewish* nation was set up by him, by his enjoining them *new* rites, and such as were contrary to the custom of other mortals ; those things were counted profane with

them which are held sacred with us; and again, those things were lawful with them which are reputed abominable with us." Hist. Lib. 5.

§ 23. 4. Mr. Belsham himself, the oracle of the present Unitarians, who reduces the blessed Jesus to the level of a mere man, who counts his blood of no greater value than that of bulls and of goats, and who regards the authority of the sacred Scriptures no farther than it answers his own ends, (as I shall show hereafter; in the meantime see the Rev. Mr. Parson's preface to Simpson's Plea for the Deity of Jesus, London edit. 1812,) even this very Mr. Belsham acknowledges, that so far was the Levitical institutions from being a matter of indulgence to the Jews, that they were "*solely* intended," saith he, "to preserve the Jews from the idolatry and polytheism of the neighboring nations—to preserve them a distinct people, till the time appointed came for the opening of the Christian dispensation, when the distinction between Jew and Gentile was to be done away." Again, he saith, "The ceremonial laws of the Mosaic dispensation were intended *merely* to preserve unbroken the barrier between Jew and Gentile till the coming of Him," &c. Here it happens for once that this heterodox divine hath advanced an orthodox sentiment. But whilst he assigns a *proper* reason for the institution, he is very much mistaken in asserting that it was "*solely* and *merely* intended" for this purpose, for he himself being judge that it was a school-master to lead to Christ; for in the very same page he saith, "In the Mosaical law *the great scheme of redemption* was obscurely insinuated, rather than distinctly portrayed, in *types and figures*, in the *sacrifices* of the altar and the *atonements* of the priest." "The Redeemer was seen through the rites of the Mosaic dispensation, as through a veil or a glass, darkly." *Religion without Cant*, p. 112. I doubt not that before Mr. Belsham goes to heaven he will not only expunge these erroneous words, "*solely* and *merely*," but find that besides these two designs, infinite wisdom had some

other ends in view in the institution of the Levitical rites.

§ 24. The following observation, in refutation of the subject under consideration, is particularly worthy of attention: "Whatever might be the bent and dispositions of the Israelites, it was Moses' proper business to rectify them. He was not to indulge them in their fancies, but inform them of their duties, and direct them to what was fit, reasonable, and consistent with good morals and piety, though that happened to be never so much against their gust and inclinations, which accordingly he every where did: and there are numerous instances of it through all his government of them. His doing otherwise might indeed have shown a great deal of *policy*, but not near so much probity and goodness as are discoverable through his whole conduct of this great people." Dr. Woodward's discourses on the ancient Egyptians, (archaol. vol. iv.)

§ 25. A remark made by my friend Allen, the translator of Outram on the Sacrifices, London edition, 1817, p. 28, shall close this letter. "There can be no need of resorting to Egyptian ingenuity for the archetypes of rites enjoined by Moses. That a notion so degrading to his system and so dishonorable to the authority by which he acted could ever be adopted by a believer in the divine legation of the Jewish lawgiver, is truly astonishing. A notion so improbable in itself requires the most positive and unequivocal evidence to justify its admission. But of such evidence it is entirely destitute. 'Its most learned advocate,' it was long ago observed by the learned Shuckford, 'is able to produce no one ceremony or usage practiced both in the religion of Abraham or Moses, and in that of the heathen nations, but that it may be proved that it was used by Abraham or Moses, or by some of the worshippers of the true God, earlier than by any of the heathen nations.' Connect. vol. i, p. 317. And that the divine author of the Jewish code imitated the customs of idolaters who had imitated and corrupted the true religion of the patriarchs, is a proposition,

the mere statement of which seems sufficient to ensure its rejection. But the adoption of this hypothesis by any who admit the Divine authority of the New Testament, as well as the Old, is still more extraordinary. The New Testament represents the law as preparatory to the Gospel, and the rites of Judaism as typical of Christianity. Hence it will follow, that if the law of Moses was a compliance with heathen notions and customs, the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be the same. This inference is unavoidable. But that the system of the Gospel, in which Jehovah is declared to have "abounded in all wisdom and prudence," which is described as an object of eternal decrees, and the consummation of preceding economies, which is represented as exciting the curiosity of angelic minds and affording them new discoveries of "the manifold wisdom of God;"—that this system was framed in compliance with the notions of erring heathens, who had "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator," is a notion equally repugnant to reason and dishonorable to revelation."

Excuse, my dear Benjamin, the length of this letter: read it over with meditation and prayer, and the God of our fathers give you an understanding mind and believing heart.
Amen. Farewell.

Letter XIII.

THE VICARIOUS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF THE MESSIAH
PREDICTED AS WELL AS TYPIFIED.

Dear Brother,

§ 1. In describing the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, it was shown that the Messiah voluntarily en-

gaged to suffer and die in the place of his people. It has also been shown that this engagement was made known to our first parents in paradise, in the promise of a Messiah, and illustrated by the institution of sacrifices, and more fully typified under the Levitical priesthood. I will now endeavor to prove that it was also predicted by the prophets, not only that the Messiah was to suffer before he entered into his glory, but that his sufferings and death were to be of a *vicarious* nature. The sufferings and death of the Messiah predicted in Dan. ch. 9th, have already been noticed, and will again be referred to hereafter. I shall confine myself more particularly to the predictions of David and Isaiah.

§ 2. It is very evident that the 22d Psalm speaks of the Messiah. It is plain from the whole of the Psalm, that *one single* individual person is spoken of; this person is distinguished from those called *brethren*, congregation of Israel, and those that feared the Lord. v. 22, 23. Hence the person suffering could not be the congregation of Israel, as Kimchi would have it. And though David met with much opposition, yet there are several circumstances mentioned which are by no means applicable to him. See ver. 14–18. Beside, the happiness which was to flow from his sufferings, and the conversion of the Gentiles, which was to follow, show that the sufferer was none but the Messiah, “in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.” The title of this Psalm, whether it signifies “the hind of the morning” or the morning star,” or as the Targum, “the daily morning sacrifice,” points out the Messiah, and has all been fulfilled, (as we shall show, God willing,) in Jesus of Nazareth, who from his birth, like a hind, was persecuted, is called the morning star, and is the antitype and fulfillment of all the sacrifices.

Several parts of this Psalm have been applied to the Messiah by our Rabbins. See Medrish Thillim in loco, and Yarchi in ver. 26.

Here we have a brief description of the *outward* sufferings

of the Messiah, but we shall now consider the nature, design, and effects thereof, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah in 53d chapter.

§ 3. The prophecies of Isaiah contain the clearest revelations of the Messiah, and are written in the loftiest style of any part of the Old Testament; but this chapter is an eminent instance of both. It contains an exact description both of his *sufferings* and his *glories*, represented in bright and lively colors, and in a phrase exceeding lofty and sublime. The veil of the temple seemed to have been drawn aside, though not yet rent asunder, and the light of the Gospel shone forth with a brighter glory than ever it had appeared before. This chapter ought to commence with the last three verses of the preceding one, "Behold my servant." Thus Abarbanel begins it, and hath divided the whole into three parts; the first comprises the last three verses of chap. 52, the second part from verse 1-9, and the third part contains the last three verses.

§ 4. That the prophet does not speak of himself, is allowed on all hands; and that he spake of the Messiah, will appear from the following considerations.

1. From the beginning to the end of this prophecy, there is but one and the same person spoken of.

2. He is characterized as the *righteous servant* of Jehovah; as a most innocent, blameless, and holy person, who deserved no punishment on his own account. ch. 52 : 13; ch. 53 : 11. 9.

3. His condition, from his birth to his death, is described as lower than any of the sons of men. Thus he is represented as a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief; as wounded and bruised to death; as judicially condemned and cut off out of the land of the living, pouring out his soul unto death, and put in his grave.

4. His sufferings and death are ascribed to the purpose and immediate hand of God. "*Jehovah* hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." ver. 6. "It *pleased* Jehovah to bruise him; *He* hath put him to grief." ver. 10.

5. The design of God in thus dealing with the person, was to inflict upon him the punishment due to our sins, that thereby he might accomplish the work of redemption. This is such an important article, that the prophet mentions it *repeatedly* in a *variety* of expressions. Verse 4, "Surely he hath *born our griefs* and *carried our sorrows*; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" ver. 5. "But he was *wounded for our transgressions*, he was *bruised for our iniquities*, the *chastisement of our peace* was upon him: and *with his stripes* we are healed." Again, verse 6, "The *Lord* hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Again, verse 8, "For the *transgression of my people* was he stricken." Again, verse 10, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Again, verse 11, "*He* shall bear their iniquities." Again, verse 12, "*He* bare the sin of many."

6. This sufferer is described as *voluntarily* putting himself in the place of the guilty, to suffer in their stead; and when actually engaged in the work, he endured his sufferings with unparalleled patience. For though "he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." ver. 7.

7. That because of his humble, mean, and suffering condition, many would conclude that he was a deceiver, and therefore reject him, but would afterwards acknowledge their error. "Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has *born our griefs* and *carried our sorrows*; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." ver. 1-4. Yet after this person "was cut off out of the land of the living, and his grave made with the wicked," ver. 8, 9, he shall live again, "and shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high,"

ch. 52: 13; "shall sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouth at him," ver. 15; "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands, and he shall justify many." ch. 53: 10, 11.

§ 5. From the whole it appears that some eminent person is here described, under the title of the *servant of the Lord*, who should go through much undeserved shame and suffering, even unto death, for the sake and benefit of other people, who should endure all indignities with the greatest meekness and patience, even offering up himself, of his own accord; and at last should be highly honored and exalted, in reward of his obedience, and see the success of all his sufferings in the *justification* of those whose *iniquities* he had *borne*, and in their admission to *divide* the *spoil* of his enemies, and enjoy a state of glory and happiness with him. Now, my dear Benjamin, let me ask, who could the person be to whom all these characters belonged, without any strain or violence put upon the words, without any breach or violation of that unity which the whole contexture of the passage requires?

§ 6. Surely it is not applicable to King Josiah, notwithstanding his piety. The expedition in which he fell at *Megiddo*, was no advantage to his character. It was rashly undertaken, not only without just provocation, but against the express warning and command of God. His death therefore was manifestly the punishment of *his own* sin and temerity; much less had it the virtue of an expiation or atonement; it averted not the divine vengeance from our people, but left them exposed to the ravages of the *Chaldeans*, who, a few years after, led them captive into Babylon.

§ 7. No more is it applicable to Jeremiah the prophet. He was indeed remarkable for piety, zeal and faithfulness, and on that account was much hated and persecuted; still he is very far from answering the character of this prediction. He relates of himself, that he bore his sufferings very

ill. He cursed the day of his birth ; he expostulated with God for giving way to the treachery of his people ; he prayed that he might see God's vengeance on them ; and very unwilling to die, he at last capitulated for his life. Jer. 12 : 1-4 ; 20 : 12, 14, 37, 38. Let the learned *Grotius* and his followers say whether this be the carriage that suits the "meekness of the lamb, and the silence of the sheep before her shearers ?" Does it come up to "interceding for the transgressors, or the making himself freely an offering for sin ?" His sufferings possessed no merit. They did not procure him *a seed*, a long succession of disciples ; nor were they the means of converting Gentile kingdoms.

§ 8. Much less does this prophecy relate to the *supposed* Messiah ben *Joseph*. The person characterized is to suffer and die for the sins of his people, that they might be healed and justified ; but our Rabbins tell us that Messiah ben Joseph is to be engaged in war, and that he and his people are to be slain in battle. Again, this person is said to rise again, to be very prosperous, to have many kings subjecting themselves to him, and to have a multitude of people as his followers ; but no such things are believed concerning Messiah ben Joseph. Besides, I have already shown that the whole story of *two* Messiahs is without foundation in the sacred Scripture, and is a mere fiction of our Rabbins.

§ 9. Once more I will show that this prophecy does not relate to the sufferings of our nation. It has been said that our nation's sufferings are to atone for the sins of the Gentiles, and to be the means of their becoming proselytes to Judaism. But this cannot be the case. For it has already been observed, that the sufferer is described as a most innocent, blameless, and holy person, who deserved no punishment on his own account. Has this been the character of our people at any time ? Ask the prophets, and they will tell you that those in their days were a sinful and rebellious people ; and they prophesied of those who should live under the second temple, that their sins would be the ruin of the city,

and the cause of the dispersion of our nation. Ask our historian Josephus, and he will confirm the truth of their predictions. For thus he testifies: "If the *Romans* had delayed to come against them, the earth must have opened and swallowed them up, or fire been rained upon them, as on *Sodom*; for the *Jews* were then a much wickeder generation than those that had suffered these extraordinary punishments." Josephus De Bel. ch. 6 : 16 ; 11 : 30. Nor do our Rabbins differ; for, as has already been shown, they affirm that the coming of the Messiah has been delayed because of the sins of our people.

Again, the sufferer is said to put himself voluntarily in the place of the guilty, and to bear his sufferings with unparalleled patience; but this is not applicable to our people. Notwithstanding their obedience to the laws of the countries where they live, and their prayers and supplications for "the powers that be;" yet their sufferings are not *voluntary*. It is well known that the obstinate resistance of our fathers to the Roman power was the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem, together with our beautiful temple, and the awful calamities which succeeded, too heart-rending to be described; nor would they willingly continue any longer in exile, if the God of our fathers were to open a door for their return to the land of promise, as he will surely do *in his own time*, as will be shown hereafter. Hence their daily prayers for deliverance.

Again, the person is said to be cut off from the land of the living, to be buried and to rise again; which expressions are to be understood literally, as all the rest of the prophecy, and consequently are not applicable to the sufferings of our nation.

§ 10. Before I dismiss this part of the subject, I will just take notice of "a Jewish Tract, on the 53d chap. of Isaiah, written by Dr. Montalto, in Portuguese, about the year 1650, and translated and published in London, by Philo-Veritas. An. 1790." The author agrees in the opinion just stated, that

the sufferer mentioned means our people collectively ; but he asserts that they suffer for their own sins, and not for the sins of any other. For in ver. 8th he translates the last clause, "for the transgressions of my people were *they* stricken," and in his explanation he saith, "God declares that the punishments of Israel were for *his own* iniquities, and not for those imputed to them by different nations." Again, he saith, "It becomes us to bear with fortitude those inflictions which *our own transgressions* have merited."

Now my dear Benjamin will easily anticipate an objection against this author's sentiment. As he acknowledges that Israel is a sinner and deserves punishment, therefore Israel cannot be the sufferer described by Isaiah ; for he is said to be innocent, and to suffer on account, in the place, and for the good of others. Again, he saith that the persons speaking and the sufferer are distinct. The former he saith are the Gentile nations, and the latter our nation, spoken of collectively as one man. "In the 14th and 15th verses (chap. 52,) is expressed, the astonishment of all nations, to behold our redemption !—In the 1st, 2d and 3d verses of the 53d chapter, their wonder breaks out at this sudden exaltation, by the hand of God, of a people, in whose countenances nought but shame and dejection had appeared during their long dispersion." But these persons contradict the author ; whilst he asserts that the sufferer is afflicted for *his own sin*, they repeatedly affirm that he suffered for *their* sins. See ver. 4, 5, 6, 11, 12. Yea, this author contradicts himself, for he thus paraphrases verse 4th : "the nations exclaim, that surely Israel had borne the punishment of all their sins and violations." Such is the confusion and contradiction which runs through the whole of this tract ; an awful specimen of the blindness which "has in part happened unto Israel."

§ 11. At the close of this tract the author has an observation which is too true, even in the 19th century. It is as follows : "I hope I may be permitted to advert with more of

pleasantry than asperity to the extreme readiness of Christians to leave us in undisturbed possession of all the evil foretold us, and which we at present experience, whilst they kindly interpret of themselves those pleasing promises which hold forth with equal certainty the felicity of our latter days."

§ 12. Having, I trust, satisfactorily refuted the misapplication of this prophecy, I shall now show that our ancient Rabbins understood it of the Messiah. Instead of those words, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently," the Targum hath it, "behold, my servant the Messiah shall be exalted, and increase and grow up, and shall greatly increase and prevail." R. Tanchuma says, "Behold my servant, &c. this is King Messiah, who shall be established above Abraham, shall be exalted above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels." Aben Ezra says, "This chapter is very difficult, and many have explained it of the Messiah." R. Solomon Yarchi, on the place, saith, "our Rabbins understand this of the Messiah;" and the reason he assigns for their interpretation is "that they say that the Messiah is stricken, as it is written, 'He took our infirmities and bare our griefs,' " which are the words of the 4th verse of the 53d chapter. Hence, it appears, that our ancient Rabbins joined the last three verses of the 52d chapter with the 53d, and applied the prophecy to the *same* person. Besides, he cites a certain Midresh out of Bereshith Rab. on Gen. 28 : 10, where mention is made of Zach. 4 : 7, "Who art thou, O great mountain?" he answereth, "That great mountain is the Messiah." Again, he asks, "Why does he call the Messiah a great mountain?" he answereth, "Because He is greater than the fathers; as it is written, 'Behold my servant, &c. this is the Messiah.' In the same book, on Gen. 24 : 67, it is said that Messiah the King was in the generation of the wicked; that he gave himself to seek for mercies for Israel, and to fasting and humbling himself for them, as it is written, "he was wounded for our transgressions," &c. See also

the same author on Ruth, 2 : 14. R. Moshe Alshech saith, " Behold, our doctors of blessed memory, concluded with one mouth, as they have received from *their ancestors*, that this is spoken of the Messiah." In the Talmud Bab. Sanhed. the question being asked what is the name of the Messiah ? It is answered, " the *Leper*, as it is written, Isa. 53 : 4, Surely he hath borne our griefs," &c. Certainly, our people have no cause to blame the evangelists and apostles in applying it to the Messiah. Some of our ancient Rabbins have plainly taught that the Messiah was to suffer and die in the place of his people. In Neve Shalom it is thus written : " The purification which the Messiah will make, shall be for the expiation of sin in general, for destroying transgression and making an end of sin, which retains mankind under its yoke. For as the first Adam was the first that sinned, so Messiah shall be the last, who shall completely take away sin." Lib. 9. c. 5. In the same sense are the words, Ps. 2 : 12, explained in Medrash Thil. " This may be illustrated by a parable. A certain king was angry with his subjects. They therefore went and made his son their friend, that thus they might conciliate the mind of their king. The son departed and reconciled his father, as they had reconciled to themselves the son. They went to give thanks to the king, but the king said to them, you give thanks to me, but go and offer them to my son, for had it not been for him, I should have destroyed the province." Lamp. John, 1 : 18.

§ 13. It is evident, therefore, dear Benjamin, that the prediction under consideration respects the Messiah, and describes his sufferings and death as a real vicarious sacrifice for the sins of his people ; and the language is so significant, that there is no way by which it could be more clearly denoted, or more properly expressed. Thus what the Messiah had engaged in the eternal covenant, to suffer in the place of his people, was predicted by the prophets. In my next letter I will endeavor to show that Jesus of Nazareth answered all that was typified and predicted concern-

ing the priesthood of the Messiah. May the Lord prepare your heart to receive Christ crucified, as the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. Farewell.

Letter XIV.

JESUS A PRIEST AND SACRIFICE.

Dear Brother Benjamin,

§ 1. It is a long time since I received a letter from you. I am very desirous to know your opinion on the important subject of my last letters. To guilty and depraved sinners, what can be of greater importance than the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, and the application of that precious blood, which was shed for the remission of sin, upon our heart, to purge our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? To this subject I would once more invite your attention. Having, at considerable length, shown that the Messiah was to be a priest, and that he was to offer up himself, in body and soul, by suffering and dying as a vicarious sacrifice, I will now endeavor to show that Jesus of Nazareth was such *a priest*, and that he offered such *a sacrifice*. And may you and I, my dear Benjamin, and whoever may read these letters, realize and experience the truth of the following beautiful remark: "As the sun paints the clouds with variety of glorious colors, which, in their own nature, are but dark and lowering vapors exhaled from the earth; so, when the Sun of Righteousness arises, even the carnal ordinances and commandments of the law, dark and earthly as they seem, are gilded by his beams, and wear a smiling

appearance. By his kindly influence, who is the light of the world, the most barren places of the Scripture rejoice, and blossom as the rose. What portion of sacred writ is more apt to be perused without edification and delight, than what relates to the Levitical priesthood; the qualifications of their persons, their apparel, their consecration, and different parts of their functions? And, indeed, it must be confessed a very hard task to reconcile, with the wisdom of God, the enjoining such numberless rites, purely for their own sake. But when we consider that Aaron and his successors were *figures* of our great *High Priest*, we must acknowledge that these injunctions are neither unworthy of God, nor useless to man; but are profitable for doctrine, and instruction in righteousness." M'Ewen.

§ 2. All that was excellent in Aaron and his successors, and all that was useful in the sacrifices, is to be found in Jesus Christ, but in all things he was infinitely superior both to the priests and their oblations. In illustrating and confirming this proposition, I shall appeal more frequently to the Epistle to the Hebrews, than to any other part of the Bible. It hath often been observed, that this epistle seems to have been written, in a particular manner, to elucidate the nature of the priesthood. The subject indeed, as to the *substance* of it, is hinted at in other passages of the New Testament; but yet, if we may so say, more sparingly than, perhaps, any other doctrine of like importance. The Holy Ghost seems to have reserved it for this epistle. And allow me, dear brother, to recommend it to your serious and careful perusal; yea, would to God that our brethren would candidly read it. How desirable that the same end might be accomplished amongst our people, as that which it was designed to effect, when it was first written and addressed to the Hebrews. It evidently appears that the author's design was to prove what our learned doctors, and scribes, and elders in Jerusalem strongly denied; namely, that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had lately put to death, is *Christ, the*

son of God; and that the Gospel, of which Jesus is both the subject and the author, is of divine original, and universal obligation. In this letter, all the arguments and objections by which those who put Jesus to death endeavored to set his claim aside and overturn the Gospel, are introduced, examined, and confuted; his title and authority, as a law-giver, to abolish the institutions of Moses, and to substitute the Gospel dispensation in their room, is established; the absolute inefficacy of the Levitical atonements to procure the pardon of sin, is demonstrated; the reality of the sacrifice of himself, which Christ offered for sin, together with its efficacy and its acceptableness to God, are clearly proved. And on all these considerations the unbelieving brethren were exhorted to forsake the law of Moses and embrace the Gospel; and such of our nation as had embraced it, were cautioned against apostacy.

§ 3. Let us *first* consider the person of Jesus Christ answerable to that of the high priest.

Here we shall notice his descent and qualifications, his call, his dress, and his consecration. To most of these the apostle had a reference in the following few verses: "Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron: so also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek." Heb. 5: 1-6.

§ 4. 1. With respect to the *descent* and *qualifications* of the high priest. According to the law of Moses, every high priest was to be of the stock of Israel, the tribe of Levi, and the family of Aaron, having his genealogy well attested

his body sound, and his life temperate. In this respect Jesus Christ is not a whit behind Aaron and his successors. Of him it is testified "that he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham; and as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Heb. 2 : 14-16. This was necessary, else he could not have been a fit Mediator between God and man. He must be our kinsman by nature, before he could be our Goel or Redeemer by office. It must indeed be acknowledged that he was neither of the tribe of Levi nor of the family of Aaron; for "it is evident our Lord sprang out of Judah, and Moses says nothing of the priesthood belonging to that tribe," Heb. 7 : 14; and this indeed disqualified him from officiating in the temple, yet it does not in the least infer his incapacity to be a priest of a higher order than that of Aaron, even after the order of Melchisedek, who joined in *one* person the priest and the king.

With respect to this "wonderful man," many things are concealed which are too curiously inquired after, and those things which are revealed, are "hard to be understood." Let it suffice to mention, that in the *order of Aaron* were many priests, who, like other mortals, resigned their breath by the stroke of death, and their priestly honor was laid in the dust with them. We know from whence they arose; with what carnal ordinances and ceremonies they received their inaugurations; what sacrifices they offered; in what holy places they officiated; who assisted them in their various functions, and who succeeded them when they died. But Jesus, the priest after the "order of Melchisedek," being possessed of immortal life, and called of God, without external ceremonies, to his high office, himself was the sacrifice, himself was the altar, himself was his tabernacle and temple, assisted by none, nor succeeded by any. Of him alone can it be said to have neither beginning of days, nor end of life. Being set up from everlasting, he abideth a priest continually: for, though he died, yet, even in death, he was

a priest ; and now “ he ever liveth to make intercession for his people.” But to return.

§ 5. Like Aaron, our Jesus was taken from among men, and was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and no priest could ever boast of such illustrious pedigree as he : which of them all was born of a virgin ? and “ to which of them said God at any time ; thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ? ” Again, the soundness of their bodies was infinitely surpassed by the integrity and perfection of the soul of our blessed Savior. This was absolutely necessary, for the least deformity here had rendered him utterly incapable of propitiating the Deity by the sacrifice of himself ; for, “ such an High Priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” Heb. 7 : 26 and “ a lamb without blemish, and without spot,” even in the pure eyes of God.

One of the most important qualifications of the high priest was to be able to minister between God, and men in such a manner as to be impartial and faithful toward the justice and truth of God, and not to be overruled by his love to men, to injure Him ; and to be compassionate and merciful toward the errors of men, and not to be overruled by his zeal to God’s justice, to give over the care and service of them. Such a high priest is Jesus, our *Emmanuel* ; zealous for his Father’s righteousness and glory ; for he was “ set forth to declare the righteousness of God,” Rom. 3 : 25 ; and he did glorify him on the earth, by finishing the work which he had given him to do, John, 17 : 4 ; and he was compassionate toward the errors and miseries of his people, for he was appointed to expiate and to remove them out of the way. Col. 2 : 14. Hence, although he was to endure all *sinless infirmities* ; such as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, sufferings, temptations, revilings, slanders, &c. that having *experience* and *sense* of these things, he might know how to have compassion on others. Heb. 4 : 15.

§ 6. 2. The call of the high-priest is the next thing which invites our attention. This call was as necessary as his per-

sonal qualifications. The former gave him a *fitness*, the latter *authority*. For no man can warrantably assume to himself the honor and dignity of the high priest's office, and offer gifts and sacrifices for sin with acceptance, but he who is called of God to that office, and authorized by his special and immediate appointment to execute it, as was Aaron at the first institution of the Levitical priesthood. In like manner, Jesus of Nazareth, our great high priest "glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but He that said unto him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee: as he saith also in another place, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek." Heb. 5: 5, 6. Here the apostle proves the *authority* of our blessed Savior to his priestly office by two testimonies from the Old Testament, both of which, as we have already shown, have been applied to the Messiah by our ancient Rabbins. This was peculiarly necessary, inasmuch as the Hebrews might be at a loss to understand how Christ could be called a high priest, unless he had descended from Aaron, in whose family the high priesthood was settled by the law; but from these words they might learn that there was a priesthood appointed of God, antecedent to, and of a more excellent order than that of Aaron, and that the priesthood of Messiah, David's Lord, was to be according to that *order*, namely, the order (or after the similitude, Heb. 7: 15) of Melchisedek's priesthood.

§ 7. The apostle not only proves the call of Christ, but shows likewise its superiority over that of Aaron, in its being confirmed by an oath. By this oath, Jehovah honored the Messiah above Aaron and his successors, and gave strong consolation to his people in such a royal high priest, who should effectually manage all their concerns with him for ever. In the 7th chapter the apostle gives a very minute explanation of this oath, by which he sets forth the excellency and dignity of Christ's priesthood above the Aaronical; and argues from it, that as the oath mentions another

priest, that was to arise according to the order of Melchisedek, it must import that the Aaronical priesthood was to be set aside, and the Mosaic law disannulled, which settled that priesthood in the tribe of Levi and family of Aaron, and by which all its ministrations were prescribed and regulated:—that the reason why the Levitical priesthood was abrogated, was the weakness and unprofitableness of it for obtaining real pardon of sin, purification of conscience, and free access to God; for the law, by all its sacrifices and external purification, made none perfect in these respects; but that the *oath* intimates the introduction of a better hope, namely, Christ's priesthood, by which we draw near to God with acceptance. Dear Benjamin, read the whole of this seventh chapter to the Hebrews, with fervent prayer to God for light and love. To me it hath been of invaluable benefit. It hath confirmed my faith in the truth of the Christian religion; convinced me of the ability of Jesus to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him; and hath powerfully encouraged me to come unto a throne of grace, where I found mercy and grace to help in time of need.

§ 8. 3. Although we cannot stay to point out the typical design of all the priestly *garments*, yet we must notice some. The fair miter which adorned Aaron's head, and the golden plate surrounding his temples, with the venerable inscription "Holiness to the Lord," was a figure of him who is a priest upon his throne, and is holiness itself, and the fountain of holiness to his people.

Did the high priest carry the names of the twelve tribes, both upon his shoulder and upon his breastplate; so does our blessed Jesus carry the name of every true Israelite, both upon the shoulders of his almighty power, and on the breastplate of cordial love, and from which not the smallest jewel shall ever be picked by the joined powers of hell and earth.

The Urim and Thummim placed into the breastplate of Aaron, but afterward lost, are found to greater advantage

in Jesus, our great high priest. However ignorant we may be about the nature or form of those which Aaron wore, none will dispute that their names signify light and perfection; and thus they were typical of that light of wisdom and perfection of holiness which were so admirably displayed in every part of our Savior's conduct.

Aaron's beautiful girdle of costly texture, gold and purple, blue and scarlet, was but a faint emblem of the Messiah, of whom it was prophesied, that "faithfulness shall be the girdle of his loins, and righteousness the girdle of his reins. Sweet was the sound of those golden bells suspended around the hem of Aaron's under-robe, but far more sweet and pleasant was the sound of those "gracious words" which proceeded from the lips of Jesus, "who spake as never man spake." And blessed are the people who hear the joyful sound of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

§ 9. 4. The consecration of the high priest is next to be considered. Aaron and his sons were brought before the tabernacle of the congregation, and there they were washed with water, arrayed with the priestly garments, anointed with costly oil, and sanctified by the offering up of peculiar sacrifices, the blood of which was put upon the extreme points of their bodies. In all this, Jesus, our great high priest, is infinitely more glorious. Before he entered on his ministry, when about thirty years of age, he was publicly baptized by John, his harbinger; not indeed because he was himself polluted, but as it became him to "fulfill all righteousness." That the unction by which Christ was consecrated, was different from, but superior to that of any who had been anointed before or after him, we have already shown in a former letter.

Our Jesus, indeed, was not consecrated by having a sacrifice offered for himself, and its blood sprinkled upon his body, but this bespeaks his superiority over all other priests. Our high priest being "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, needeth not from time to time, like the

Aaronical high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, (for he had none,) and then for the sins of the people; for this he did effectually at once, when he offered up himself. For the *law* constitutes men high priests who have sinful infirmity, and therefore need to offer for their own sins; but the *word of the oath*, which was since the law was given, constitutes the Son a high priest, who is consecrated for evermore." Heb. 7: 26-28.

§ 10. We will now proceed to consider the *second* part of the subject, viz. to show that the office or function of the high priest was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Beside his offering up gifts and sacrifices for sin, the high priest was also appointed to bless the people; to pray for them; to instruct them in the knowledge of the divine will; to oversee the service of the tabernacle; to blow the trumpet, and to judge between the clean and the unclean. Now we see Jesus our high priest giving himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor, more grateful unto God, and more appeasing to his incensed justice, than all the victims that ever smoked in the worldly sanctuary, or than all the gifts that ever were presented there, or than all the incense that ever fumed from the golden censer. "Put off your robes, ye legal priesthood, your work is finished, your office is entirely superseded. What ye could not do by multiplied oblations, Jesus Christ hath done by one sacrifice. The veil is now rent, and the temple now destroyed. The *shadow* hath given place to the *substance*. Jesus is that priest whom God hath sent to bless us; who prays for his people; whose lips keep knowledge to instruct us in the will of God. Jesus is that priest who oversees the service of the tabernacle, being head over all things to the church, which is his body. Jesus is that priest who now blows the great trumpet of the Gospel, and who shall descend shortly from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, to gather the congregation of the righteous. Then all who have not *Him* for their priest, to wash and

sprinkle them with his hyssop and blood, shall have him for their priest, to pronounce them utterly unclean." But to do any justice to this subject, we must particularly consider the *sacrifice* which Jesus offered; the *intercession* he makes; and the *blessing* he bestows. To make it evident that Christ offered up a sacrifice agreeably and answerably to the types and predictions concerning the sacrifice of the Messiah, I shall show,

§ 11. 1. That the sacrifice which he offered had *respect unto God*. That Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, sustains the office of a priest, as well as that of a prophet, we have already demonstrated. But the nature and design of these offices are radically different; and one of these differences is, that a prophet ministers from God to man, but a priest ministers from men to God. The apostle Paul hath taken particular notice of this distinction. Speaking of prophets and apostles, he says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5: 20. But the work of a priest he defines thus: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained *for men* in things *pertaining to God*, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin." Heb. 5: 1. Furthermore, Jehovah expressly and repeatedly calls the sacerdotal office *a ministering to himself*. "And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, that they may minister *unto me* in the priest's office." Ex. 28: 41; 29: 44; 30: 30. Accordingly the Messiah engaged in the eternal covenant, to offer himself a ransom for his people; and of Jesus Christ it is asserted that he hath "given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice *to God* for a sweet-smelling savor." Eph. 5: 2. Beside, sacrificing, like praying and thanksgiving, was an act of religious worship, and therefore could have respect to God only, as its true object; and hence sacrifices were to be offered only in the sanctuary, dedicated and consecrated for the service of Jehovah. Again, as the life of the victim was

surrendered to God as the price of expiation, and in order to obtain for the sinner the favor of him to whom it was solemnly presented, and on whose altar it was laid; so in like manner Jesus Christ became a vicarious sacrifice, and gave his life a ransom to expiate our sins, and to be "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3 : 25, 26. What hath been said may suffice to show that Jesus Christ, as a priest, officiated from men to God. We proceed now to show,

§ 12. 2. Wherein the sacrifice consists. It must be allowed, that whoever is a real priest, must have a sacrifice. The very nature of his employment requires it. His whole and entire office, as a priest, consists in *offering sacrifices*, with the performance of those things which did necessarily precede and follow the action. This, it is evident, the apostle took for granted; "for," says he, "every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." Heb. 8 : 3. In a former letter it was already mentioned that the human nature of the Messiah, consisting of a real body and soul, was to be the sacrifice, agreeably to the prediction in Ps. 40 : 6, 7. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened," (or a body hast thou prepared me, as the apostle *explains* it, Heb. 10 : 5; see Dr. Owen in loco :) "burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me." The prophet Isaiah also speaks of the Messiah as "pouring out his soul unto death," and "his soul becoming a sin offering." ch. 53 : 10-12.

§ 13. Nor ought it to be questioned by the believer of the New Testament, that Jesus Christ offered up his body and soul as a real sacrifice. Our Lord's own language is very

explicit: "I am the good shepherd the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep." John, 10: 11. When he instituted the memorials of his dying love, he gave bread to his disciples, and said: Take, eat; this is my *body*. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink, ye all of it, for this is my *blood* of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins;" and the same evening, when prostrated on the ground under the weight of our sins, he exclaimed, "My *soul* is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Matt. 26: 26-28, 38. The same truth is evident from the expressions used by the apostles, "Who gave *himself* a ransom," 1 Tim. 2: 6, "when he had by *himself* purged our sins;" "when he offered up *himself*;" "to put away sin by the *sacrifice* of *himself*;" "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." Heb. 1: 3. 7: 27; and 9: 26. 19: 10; "who his *own self* bare our sins in *his own body* on the tree." 1 Pet. 2: 24. Also from the application of Ps. 40 to Jesus Christ. Heb. 10: 5-9; and from the comparison between the Levitical sacrifices and that offered by Jesus Christ.

§ 14. I would further observe, that as it was necessary for the Messiah to have a real human nature, to be capable of dying as a vicarious sacrifice, in obedience to the will of his Father; so it was equally necessary that there should be an altar proportionate to the nature of this sacrifice. For it is the altar that *sanctifies* the gift, was the sentiment of our ancient Rabbins referred to by our Lord and Savior. Matt. 23: 19. Now this altar was nothing less than the divine nature of our blessed *Immanuel*; and which gave infinite value to the sufferings of his human nature, with which it was united; as gold, which hath a luster of itself, hath a greater when the sun shines upon it. Hence, we may well say that Jesus Christ was priest, sacrifice and altar. A priest in his person, a sacrifice in his humanity, and the altar in his divinity.

Upon this foundation, my dear Benjamin, rests my hope

of eternal salvation. Nor shall any who rely on this sacrifice be either "ashamed, confounded, or make haste." For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." Heb. ch. 9: 13, 14.

Having already extended this letter beyond the usual limits, I shall leave the remainder of the subject to our next.

Farewell.

Letter XV.

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST VICARIOUS.

Beloved Brother Benjamin,

§ 1. In my last letter I noticed two important circumstances respecting the sacrifice of Christ, viz. *to whom* he offered, and *what* he offered. I shall now proceed to show,

3. The design of his sacrifice. That Jesus Christ suffered, is believed by all, and needs therefore no proof; nor does the subject in hand require us to consider, at present, the *nature* and *circumstances* of his sufferings; but it is very necessary to show that he suffered and died as an *expiatory* and *vicarious* sacrifice, else he would not have answered the character of the promised Messiah; for we have already shown, both from the Old Testament Scriptures, as well as from the testimony of our Rabbins, that Messiah was to die an expiatory and vicarious death. It is not enough to say,

as too many who call themselves Christians do, that Christ suffered and died *merely* that we might be thereby induced to believe the truth of the doctrines he delivered, as he confirmed them by shedding his blood, or that he might give us an example of patience and holy fortitude, under the various evils we are exposed to, either in life or in death.

§ 2. Now with respect to the former, viz. "that Christ died to confirm his doctrine," I would observe, that this is altogether without a warrant from the sacred Scriptures. Nor could his death be an evidence of the truth he taught; for many, doubtless, have laid down their lives to confirm doctrines that were evidently false. It may prove the *sincerity* of their heart, but it is no proof of the *soundness* or correctness of their creed. Nor did Jesus want such evidence, for his miracles were abundantly sufficient for that end. And if the latter, viz. of setting us an example of resignation to the will of God, and patience under afflictions, was all that was to be accomplished by the life and death of Jesus, then I ask, what greater obligation are we under to him, than to the "cloud of witnesses," or martyrs that went before him, and those that have followed after him? What did he more for us than they have done? Nay, dear Benjamin, I declare, without hesitation, that if *this be all* that Jesus did for poor sinners, I should no longer consider him as "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Can his *obedience* be compared with that of our father Abraham, who, in obedience to the command of God, took his son, his son *Isaac*, his *only* son, *in whom* all the families of the earth were to be blessed, and laid him bound on the altar, to offer him up as a burnt offering? Did not Isaac know the intention of his father? and was not his *will* bound with the cords of love and obedience to the sovereign will of God, before his hands and feet were bound, and laid on the altar of burnt offerings? Hath he given us a specimen of *meekness* like that of Moses, who, for the space of *forty* years, bore with our nation, a people stiff-necked and

rebellious, and yet spake *only once* unadvisedly with his lips? Are his sufferings worth naming, whilst we read of the sufferings and patience of Job? "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of those that were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others, that had trials of cruel mocking and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Heb. 11: 32, &c. But on the supposition that Christ, the Son of God, died as a vicarious sacrifice, his obedience to the will of his Father, and his sufferings to atone for our sins, eclipse all the excellences of men and angels, as the light of a taper is eclipsed by the splendor of the sun at noon-day. Beside, how inconsistent the sentiment of these men, who strenuously maintain that Christ died *for the good of all mankind, in all ages*, and yet as strenuously maintain that he died *only* to bear witness to the truth, and give us an example of humility, patience and submission to the will of God, which certainly could have been of no service to those who were dead before Christ was born; who neither heard the doctrines he delivered, nor saw the example he set.

§ 3. I will therefore proceed to show that Christ suffered and died as our substitute and surety, not barely *for our good*, but *in our room and stead*. This is taught in the sacred Scriptures in a variety of ways.

Our reconciliation is ascribed to the sufferings and death of Christ. "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. 5: 10. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. 5: 19. "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself." Col. 1: 19, 20.

Again, his sufferings and death are said to be the price

of our redemption. "For ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 6 : 20. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matt. 20 : 28. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things—but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet. 1 : 18, 19. Hence, Christ is called a propitiation, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." Rom. 3 : 25. 1 John, 2 : 2, 4, 10. Jesus Christ is called a propitiation, which answers to the word *Caphporeth*, i. e. mercy-seat. And as that covered the ark in which were the tables of the law, so Christ, by his complete righteousness, appeased his Father, and satisfied his law and justice for all our transgressions. He is also said "to be made a curse for us." Gal. 3 : 13. As the sins of the children of Israel were laid on the head of the sacrifice, and as the Messiah was to bear the sins and iniquities of his people, so the apostle informs the Hebrews "that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Heb. 9 : 28. And the apostle Peter evidently refers the 53d chapter of Isaiah to Jesus, saying, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Pet. 2 : 24. The Scriptures assert "that Christ died for our sins." 1 Cor. 15 : 3 ; "that he gave himself for our sins," Gal. 1 : 4, and "that he hath once suffered for sins, the *just for the unjust*." 1 Pet. 3 : 18. For the same reason, Christ as the antitype of the Levitical sacrifices, is said "to have offered himself without spot to God, when he shed his blood for us, or to have put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and to have given himself for us, a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." We have formerly observed that the great end and design of the apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, is to exalt the priesthood of Christ above that of Aaron. Now that which only *metaphorically* possesses any quality, is clearly and evidently less than that which possesses it properly and directly. If Christ be *metaphorically only* a priest, he is *less* than Aaron.

It is worthy of remark, that when Jesus Christ entered

on his public ministry, at his first appearance, John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, pointed him out as a *propitiatory* sacrifice, saying, "Behold the *Lamb* of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1 : 29. The apostle Peter ascribes our redemption to this sacrifice, which he calls "a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Pet. 1 : 19. St. John describes him as appearing in heaven in the same character, saying, "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a *lamb* as it had been slain." Again "And they fell down before the Lamb, and they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. 5 : 6, 9.

§ 4. I would further observe, that we have already proved, in a former letter, that sacrifices were appointed by God to make a *real* atonement for sin; and we have also shown that those expiatory sacrifices were typical of the Messiah; this was also predicted as well as typified; hence it followeth, that if Christ did not die an expiatory and vicarious death, he was not the promised Messiah, but a deceiver. May those who profess that Jesus is the Christ, and yet deny his vicarious death, lay this subject to heart, and may God have mercy upon their souls.

§ 5. In addition to what hath already been said, the following remarks shall close this part of our subject. The expressions used in the sacred Scriptures in favor of the atonement or satisfaction of Christ, are so plain, if they do not prove it, no other words can. The natural meaning amongst illiterate people is, the doctrine of a satisfaction. This doctrine is represented to us in a great variety of lights, and under a multitude of figures, all pointing to the same thing, a satisfaction for sin. This doctrine hath its proofs in every part of the Scriptures; and is so incorporated with every part of it, that it cannot be separated from it without altering the whole. Further, in order to disprove this doc-

trine, such a force is put upon words and phrases, and they are so distorted from their natural form and meaning, that by such rules of interpretation nothing can be certainly conveyed by writing or speech; and if the sacred writers did not design to convey to us the doctrine of an atonement or satisfaction for sin, their conduct is inexplicable, and writers so obscure and ill-qualified to convey their ideas, and more likely to lead readers wrong, did never appear. Nor ought we to overlook the remarkable fact, that Christians in all ages, with but few exceptions, have received this doctrine, as one contained in the sacred Scriptures, and of the first importance. Our next inquiry is,

§ 6. For whom did Christ die? I would answer, first, negatively, he could not be a sacrifice for himself. "The Messiah was to be cut off, but not for himself." Dan. 9: 26. He needed no sacrifice for himself, as the other high priests did; they were sinners, he was harmless. Heb. 5: 2, 3. He was "a lamb without blemish," 1 Pet. 1: 19, "who knew no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth." As the sacrifices which were types of him could not be for themselves, being not capable of sinning; so the sacrifice of Christ could not be for himself; being "conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost," and "anointed with the same spirit without measure," he was not capable of sinning. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners." In the second place, I would answer positively that the persons for whom and in whose stead Christ offered himself to God, were the whole number of the elect, which were given to him by the Father; and neither more nor less. It must be acknowledged that such is the dignity of the person who is the Redeemer, that he *might* have offered himself as effectually for every individual of the human race as for the elect, had it been *the will* of Jehovah to make the stipulation of the covenant of redemption thus extensive. But the Scriptures teach us otherwise, as has already been stated in a former letter. Christ himself has informed us that he laid down his life

in obedience to the commandment received of his Father; but he laid down his life for the *sheep*; but *all are not* his sheep, and therefore it could not be the will of his Father that he should lay down his life for every individual of the human race. See John, chap. 10th. Nor can it be denied that *some benefits in this life* flow, from the death of Christ, to those who are not his sheep. As our fathers who came out of Egypt, though they did not enter the land of promise, yet were benefited by that deliverance, being freed from bondage, and supplied with manna from heaven, and water out of a rock, &c. so the non-elect, though they derive no *saving benefits* from the death of Christ, yet they enjoy all their *temporal* blessings as the fruit of that sacrifice. And in this way those *seemingly* contradictory Scriptures, which speak on the one hand of Christ dying for his sheep, &c. and on the other, that he died for the world, &c. may easily be reconciled. Such, my dear Benjamin, is my undisguised sentiment on this doctrine, which has been the subject of so much controversy, conducted too often with a spirit very unbecoming the followers of the meek and humble Jesus.

§ 7. The following remarks of my venerable tutor, Dr. Bogue, may throw some light on the subject. In speaking on the question, "For whom did Christ make satisfaction?" he observes, "this question is agitated with considerable heat, more than it deserves. Accurate distinctions will, in a great measure, supercede the necessity of controversy. Sometimes it is said in sacred Scripture, that Christ died for all men, for the world, &c. The natural unforced meaning of the expression, some think, is the whole human race. John, 3 : 16 ; 6 : 51, 52. 2 Cor. 5 : 14. 1 Tim. 2 : 4-6. Heb. 2 : 9. 1 John, 2 : 2. In other places it is said Christ died for the church, for the elect, for his people, &c. the natural unforced meaning of these expressions limits the certain benefits of his satisfaction to a part only of the human race. John, 10 : 15. Eph. 1 : 22 ; 5 : 25. The former of these is called *universal*, and the latter *particular* redemption,

or general and particular atonement. Now, it is not consistent with sacred Scripture to deny either the one or the other, when they are both so plainly revealed; nor does it give the sacred Scripture the honor that is due, to twist and torture these expressions to make them suit a particular system. It is plain from the word of God, that there is a sense in which Christ died for all, and a sense in which he died for his people only. All the expressions in the Bible may, perhaps, be easily reconciled, if we consider the different points of view in which the subject is represented to us. If we fix our eyes on the divine decrees, Christ died for the elect. Rom. 8 : 29, 30. If we take a view of the covenant of redemption, then Christ died for those who were given him by the Father. John, 6 : 37. If we take a view of the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction, he may be said to die for the world, for all, for the whole world. Isa. 45 : 22. If we consider the invitations of the Gospel, then Christ died for all who hear the Gospel preached; and salvation is offered to them, if they will receive it. Acts, 2 : 30. If we consider the efficacy of Christ's satisfaction, and its saving influence on those that receive it, then Christ died for believers, for his people. John, 15 : 13. 1 Cor. 1 : 30. If we look at the transactions of the day of judgment, then Christ died for all holy souls that persevered in faith, holiness, and obedience, to the end of life, or for a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Matt. 25 : 44, 45. Titus, 1 : 2-24." *M. S. Lectures.*

In my next letter I will endeavor to point out the effects of Christ's death. Meanwhile, I pray, my dear Benjamin, that both you and I may manifest, by our life and conduct, that we belong to the number of Christ's sheep who hear his voice and follow him; and may the happy time speedily come, when our dear people, the scattered sheep of Israel, shall be gathered into one fold, under one shepherd, Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen. Farewell.

Letter XVI.

THE EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

Dear Brother Benjamin,

§ 1. We will now proceed to consider the effects of Christ's death, or sacrifice. As the deliverance of our fathers from the Egyptian bondage was accomplished immediately after the paschal lamb was slain, so when "Christ our passover was sacrificed for us," the whole work of redemption was completed. Hence the Lord Jesus, with his *dying* breath, but with a *loud* voice, cried, "It is finished!" The full meaning of this comprehensive and triumphant exclamation of the Redeemer will be better understood when we shall see him "no more through a glass darkly, but face to face." The prophecies of his humiliation were accomplished; the prefigurations and shadows of his death were substantiated; the battle with the powers of darkness was over; the righteousness of the law was fulfilled; the payment of the price of redemption was completed; and the work which the Father gave him to do was finished in the highest degree of perfection.

Such is the virtue and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, that every thing formidable and burdensome is removed, every thing great and glorious procured; justice with all its vengeance appeased; the law with all its retinue of curses silenced; sin with all its demerits expiated; the covenant with all its benefits ratified; peace with its blessings restored; the spirit with all its treasures bestowed; our services purified from their filth; our consciences pacified from their fears; whatsoever is grievous abrogated; the veil of the temple, with all the heavy weight of ceremonies, rent in

twain; hell quenched, and heaven prepared and furnished for all that imitate God in his valuation of this sacrifice.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," which was the (prophetic) song of a multitude of angels at the birth of Jesus, was effected by his vicarious sacrifice on the cross. In a former letter I have stated that the sentence pronounced in Paradise on the tempter was a curse to Satan, and included a promise of the Savior; and I will now show its accomplishment in the death of Christ. This may be considered,

§ 2. 1. In regard to Jehovah. Satan aimed to rob God of his glory, and to restore the glory of God was that which Jesus aimed at when he came into our world, and that which he perfected when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. The glory of all the attributes of God appeared in the face or manifestation of Christ. They all centered in him, and shone forth from him in all their brightness, and in a full combination set off one another's luster; not only in his incarnation, but also, and that chiefly, in his sacrifice. *Mercy* could not be glorified, unless justice had been satisfied; and *justice* had not been evident, if the tokens of divine wrath had not been upon him; *grace* had not sailed to us, but in the streams of his blood—"without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Justice had not been so fully known in the eternal groans of a world of creatures, nor could sin have appeared so odious to the holiness of God, by eternal scars upon devils and men, as by the deluge of blood from the heart of the sacrifice. *Wisdom*, in the contrivance, had not been evident without the execution. The cross of Christ, which is "foolishness to the Greeks, and a stumbling-block to the Jews," is the wisdom as well as the power of God unto salvation. Here unsearchable depth of wisdom was unfolded, a depth more impossible to be comprehended in our minds than the whole heaven and earth in our hands. Such a wisdom of God shines in the *cross* as the angels never beheld in his *face* upon the throne.

wisdom to cure a desperate disease by the death of the Physician; to turn the greatest evil to the greatest glory; to bring forth mercy by the shedding of blood. But the death of Christ is a display of *power* as well as of wisdom. Dear Benjamin! turn your eye toward Calvary, where our Lord was crucified, and behold exertions greater and more marvelous than the creation and support of the universe: Almighty God strengthening his dear Son with his arm, and bruising him under his wrath, sustaining him under a weight which would have crushed the creation, and by his weakness breaking the forces of earth and hell, which were in opposition. Revenging wrath is a weight which creatures are not able to bear. Principalities and powers sunk beneath it, into outer darkness and endless misery. The wrath which crushed them hung over man, who was seduced to join their rebellious powers. Men, chosen to everlasting life, were by nature children of wrath, even as others. But for the chosen generation the Lord Jesus Christ was made under the law, and endured the wrath which their sins deserved, endured it all, endured it all at once, and in the strength and glory of his weakness endured it all alone! The beams of *holiness*, which is the essential glory of the nature of Jehovah, and revealed glory of his will, shine bright and awful in the death of Jesus. In the triumph over Egypt, on the banks of the Red Sea, Moses and the children of Israel sang, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness?" and, in remembering the triumph of the cross over principalities and powers on Calvary, the song of Moses rises into the song of the Lamb, and transmits the praise of the glory of his holiness from generation to generation. The light of the knowledge of the glory of the holiness of God never broke forth in such luster and majesty. The punishment of angels, the destruction of the old world, the overthrow of the cities of the plain, the drowning of Pharaoh and his hosts, the pools of Nineveh, the humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar, and the ruins of Babylon, are

manifestations of the glory of his holiness and righteousness; but these are all in a manner eclipsed by the brighter and more awful glory that beams from the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why was that just one wounded and bruised? why was his righteous soul filled with sorrow? his blessed head crowned with thorns? his glorious face defiled with spittle? and his holy body nailed to a tree, and lifted up on a cross, between two thieves? It was because God is glorious in holiness, hates iniquity, and punishes it wherever it is found. Lastly, "God is *love*!" and the sacrifice of Christ is the manifestation of this glory of his nature. "In this," saith the apostle, "was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John, 4: 9-10. When the believing eye turns toward the cross, the love of God to sinful, guilty, and miserable men, shines forth, and becomes the object of contemplation, and theme of discourse, which can never be sufficiently praised and adored. May you and I, my dear Benjamin, "be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge." Eph. 3: 18, 19.

§ 3. 2. In the next place, we may view the effects of Christ's death in regard of himself as *Mediator*.

It hath already been shown from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that in the stipulations of the covenant of redemption a variety of promises were made to the Messiah, particularly as relating to his exaltation; all these are applied, in the New-Testament, to Jesus Christ. Thus the apostle informs us, that beside the *essential native* power and dominion over all which Christ hath as *God*, but which was, as it were, veiled during his state of humiliation, the Father hath exalted him, as Mediator, to the highest dignity and universal sovereign dominion over every thing in heaven,

and earth, and hell. From the many precious passages which relate to this all-important and most interesting subject, I have selected but a few, and pray that my dear Benjamin may feel the sweet truth they contain. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John, 17: 2. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being formed in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 6: 11. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1: 20-23. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12: 2.

By the death of Christ the covenant was ratified, confirmed and sealed, and the blessings of it put into his hands, to be disposed of at his pleasure. "For it has pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Col. 1: 19. I have already shown that the covenant which was made known to Adam immediately after the fall, was accompanied with the sacrifices of beasts, both to show to him a token of

that punishment which he had merited at the hands of justice, and in what a bloody way his recovery was to be accomplished. The repetition of it to Abraham was confirmed by sacrifices, Gen. 15 : 18. and the solemn covenant between God and the Israelites was also confirmed by sacrifices, and the blood of them is called the *blood* of the covenant, Ex. 24 : 5, 8 ; i. e. a type of that blood which should be shed for the confirmation of that blessed covenant, whereby the soul shall be purified from sin. Hence, Christ, in the institution of the supper, calls his blood the *New Testament in his blood*, i. e. the true blood shed for the ratification of the covenant, which was only typified by the blood of all former sacrifices.

§ 4. 3. We next notice the effects of Christ's death upon his people. It will easily occur to your mind, my dear Benjamin, that in my letter on the covenant of redemption, I stated that it contained blessings to the seed of the Messiah, as well as to himself. It has also been shown in another letter, that the curse pronounced on the tempter, (Gen. 3 : 15,) contained a revelation of the Messiah, signifying our deliverance from the misery brought into the world, and in another letter I explained the promise made to our father Abraham, that in his seed, which is the Messiah, all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. I will now point out to you the fulfillment of all this in Jesus Christ, my blessed Lord and Savior, as the effect of his atoning sacrifice. The cross of Christ has often been compared to "the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Rev. 22 : 2. Here is food in rich abundance, great variety and perpetual growth ; together with a healing influence on all nations : yet the effects and fruits of the death of Christ, of whom the tree of life in paradise was but a type are infinitely superior. As the seed of the woman, he delivers from all misery, and as the seed of Abraham, he confers numberless blessings. No sooner is the sinner delivered from the wrath of God, but he is also restored to the favor

of the Most High, which is life, and his loving-kindness, which is better than life ; no sooner is he delivered from the curse of the law, than he is interested in all the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant ; no sooner freed from the reigning power of sin and Satan, than he is under the happy influence of grace, has his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life ; no sooner delivered from the fear of death, through which he was all his life subject to bondage, than he enjoys a good hope through grace, and desires to depart to be with Christ, which is far better.

§ 5. Before I close this letter, permit me, my dear Benjamin, to detain you for a few moments on the last particular just named, viz. that deliverance from the fear of death is one of the happy fruits and effects of the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah. This has a particular reference to the sentence pronounced in paradise on the tempter Satan, and fulfilled by the death of Jesus Christ. I have mentioned in a former letter, that the sufferings of Christ, and his ignominious death, were the great stumbling-stone of our nation, and the chief cause of their rejecting him as a deceiver and impostor. Hence, to convince our brethren of the necessity of such sufferings and death, the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, uses a variety of arguments, from which I select but one, contained in verses 14 and 15, chapter 2d, viz. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Now you will perceive that in these words the apostle asserts that Satan has the power of death ; that death produceth a fear which brings men into bondage ; that Messiah Jesus came to deliver us from this fear ; that he was to effect this by destroying Satan ; and that, to accomplish the destruction of Satan, it was necessary for him to become incarnate, to suffer and to die.

§ 6. Now I wish you, my dear Benjamin, particularly to observe, that the apostle, in his other Epistles, especially to the Romans, always produces proofs to establish his positions, but not so here; and the reason doubtless is, because he well knew that these propositions were the received opinions of our nation. That our ancient Rabbins believed that Satan had the power of death, is evident from the names by which they call him. The most general is, that of *Malach Hammaveth*, i. e. the angel of death; another is, *Ashmadi*, i. e. destroyer; again, they call him *Abaddon*, i. e. the angel of the bottomless pit. (Rev. 9: 11.) Targum Jonath. on Gen. 3: 6, saith, "And the woman saw *Samael*, the angel of death." R. Simicon saith, "the same is *Satan*, the angel of death, and the evil figment." Tal. Bava Bathra. See a former letter, p. 151. The reason assigned by our Rabbins for calling Satan the angel of death, is because that by his means death entered and came upon all the world. Hence, called a liar and murderer from the beginning. John, 8: 44. 2. Because he is employed, they say, in great and signal judgments, to *inflict* death on men. They represent him as the head of those evil angels which slew the Egyptians, Ps. 78: 49. Hence those words, Ps. 9: 5, 6, are rendered by the Targum, "from the arrows of the angel of death, which he shooteth by day, and from the troops of devils that walk at noon day." Probably the apostle alludes to this, 1 Cor. 10: 10, "neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." 3. Because he taketh away the life of every individual. For you know, my dear Benjamin, that it is a common received opinion amongst our people, that when a person is to die, the angel of death appears to him in a most terrible manner, with a drawn sword in his hand, from which he drops some poison into him, and of which he immediately dies; and therefore all the water in the house and neighboring houses is instantly thrown away, lest Satan should have washed his sword in it and poisoned it. 4. They say that the angel of death has

power over men even after death. R. Elias, in his Tishbi in Chivbut Hackever from Midrash of R. Isaac ben Parnaer, says, "When a man departs out of this world, the angel of death comes and sits upon the grave. And he brings with him a chain, partly of iron, partly of fire, and making the soul to return into the body, he breaks the bones, and torments variously both body and soul for a season." Sepher Jereh chattaim. Cit. in Stehel. Trad. vol. 1, p. 235-238. David Levi, the late oracle of our people in London, on that part of the funeral prayer, "O have compassion on the remnant of the sheep of thy hands; and say to the *angel*, stay thy hand," has this note, "Meaning the angel of death."

Another part of the Chivbut Hackever arises from the pain occasioned by the worms eating up the flesh of the dead body. Hence the common saying, "Rema bebarzar Ham-meth temachad bebarzar Hachy," i. e. a worm in a dead body is as painful as a needle in a living one. Tract. Shabbath. Time would fail to speak of the torments of the soul to be endured in Gehinom, i. e. purgatory. See Maim. de Fundam. Legis. p. 48.

§ 7. These various interests of Satan in the power of death, both keeps our people in dismal bondage all their days, and has put them upon the invention of several ways for their deliverance. Hence, you know, that one of their solemn prayers, on Yom Kivbur, i. e. day of expiation, is to be delivered from Chivbut Hackever, i. e. the punishment of the devil in the grave. Hence, on the preceding day, a cock is offered *to the devil*, for his pacification, accompanied by the following prayer, "That it may please thee (good Lord) to deliver us from evil decrees, from poverty, from contempt, from all kinds of punishment, from the judgment of hell, and from the beating in the grave." This cock is a substitute for the scape goat, which our Rabbins say was offered to the devil, by which he who was before their accuser, becomes their friend; and the punishments due to

their sins are laid upon the Gentiles. See *Yalkut Rubeni*, fol. 129, c. 3. *Emeck. Hammelech*, fol. 146, c. 4.

Is it then to be wondered, my dear Benjamin, that a firm belief of these, and a thousand similar dogmas of our Rabbins, of blessed memory, should produce that fear which makes our people subject to bondage all their life-time? You have probably not forgotten how often we have talked about the fear of death, and sometimes even hesitated to eat our necessary food, lest we should grow bulky, and suffer the greater pain from the worms that would consume our flesh after death. To some, indeed, it may seem strange that any one in his right senses should believe such things. But you know how our dear father and teachers instructed us, that it was our duty to receive all the dogmas and maxims of the Rabbins, not only without evidence, but even against evidence. For thus it is written, "Thou shalt not depart from their words, even though they should tell thee of the right hand, this is the left; or of the left hand, this is the right." Again, "Whosoever scorns the words of the wise men, shall be cast into boiling dung in hell." "Whoever breaks the words of the scribes, is worthy of death." See, among others, *Cad. Hackem*, fol. 77 : 3. *Yarchi Exp.* on *Gittin* f. 57 : 1. on *Deut.* chap. 17 : 11. *Caph. Uverech*, fol. 121 : 1. *Mid.* on *Prov.* fol. 1 : 3. *Tal. Eruvim*, fol. 21 : 2. *Bux. Syn. Jud.* c. 3. p. 73. *Bartoloc. Bib. Rab.* tom. 4. p. 361.

§ 8. You will remember, my dear Benjamin, that in a preceding letter I have shown, both from the Scriptures and from the writings of our Rabbins, that the design of Satan in seducing our first parents, seems to have been to destroy them, and so to have put an end to the human species. But the Messiah, who was promised to come of the seed of the woman, was to bruise the head of the serpent, i. e. frustrate this malicious design. I will only refer to one prediction on this subject, delivered by the prophet *Isa.* 25 : 8. "He will swallow up death in victory,"* or for ever, i. e. the Messiah

* David Levi, in the prayer at the burial of the dead. which con-

shall, by his death and resurrection from the dead, obtain such an entire victory over death, not only for himself, but for all his people, that in the resurrection-morn, when they

tains this passage, has the following notes. Note 1. "The Almighty will, in the days of the Messiah, swallow up death for ever; i. e. there will be no more death, because there will be no more sin; not even the ravenous beasts, such as the lion, wolf, and leopard, nor the venomous creatures, as the asp, and cockatrice, will have power to hurt or destroy; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Isa. 11 : 6-8." Note 2. "It is worthy of remark here, that according to the English translation, this passage is, 'he will swallow up death in *victory*!' Isa. 25 : 8. What it was that was the occasion of leading the translators into this gross error, is impossible for me to determine; but thus much I must say, that it argues either a total ignorance of the holy language, or something worse, that of perverting the sacred text for some sinister use. This is a heavy charge indeed, and which, both in law and equity, I ought to prove; this I shall most certainly do, and that to every one's satisfaction, I trust. For I abhor and detest the idea of bringing a charge without good and substantial proof; and that I have such, will presently appear; for the Hebrew word here translated, is *Loenazoch*, whereas the word for victory is *Nauzyach*, the first having the vowel points of Koemots, Seygle, and Pausach, and the second (and which is the proper word for victory) the vowel points of Pausach, Tsyry, and Pausach. But what puts this matter beyond all dispute, is the former having the letter Lamed at the beginning, and which is equally the same in Hebrew as the particle *for* in English; and therefore, although there had been no vowel points to have determined the matter, yet the number of letters, and the manner in which they are placed, with the context, would have plainly shown the true reading thereof to any one that thoroughly understands the Hebrew, and means to act in an upright and impartial manner. Thus, having in a most clear and impartial manner (I presume) stated my charge, let those whose province it is, answer it in the same clear and impartial manner, if they can." *Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews*. I am truly sorry to see such bombastic language, such a "heavy charge" about such a trifling criticism, from the pen of one whom I have ever esteemed as one of the best informed writers amongst our modern Rabbins. The very same word, *Lanezech*, used in Isaiah, is used in the same form, both letters and points, in Proverbs, 21 : 28, and Hab. 1 : 4; and in neither of which can it mean literally and strictly, *for ever*, but must mean to succeed,

will be all raised from the dead, death will be so swallowed up, that it will be no more for ever. This prediction is applied, by our Rabbins, to the resurrection of the dead in the days of the Messiah. They say "that the Messiah shall descend from Pharez, and in his day the holy blessed God will cause death to be swallowed up," as it is said, Isa. 25 : 8, "He shall swallow up death in victory," Shemoth Rab. §. 20, fol. 131 : 4. Again, "When the King Messiah comes, the holy blessed God will raise up those that sleep in the dust; as it is written, he shall swallow up death in victory." Zohar, in Gen. 73 : 1. Exod. f. 108, 1, 2, 4. Lev. f. 46 . 3. Mish. Moed. Caton, c. 3. § 9. Yade Mose in Shir. Hash. Rab. f. 20 : 1. Echa. Rab. f. 48 : 2. It is also applied to the Lord Jesus by the apostle, 1 Cor. 15 : 54. "Death is swallowed up in victory." Now all this has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, whose death, as has been shown in former letters, was an atoning sacrifice for the sins of his people; it has fully satisfied divine justice on their account, dissolved their obligations to the punishment of eternal death, pro-

triumph, or obtain victory. In Proverbs, the testimony of the liar, and that of the faithful witness are compared; the testimony of the former "shall perish," i. e. be rejected, and come to naught; but that of the latter "speaketh constantly," Lanezech Yedabbair, i. e. speaketh successfully, triumphantly. In Hab. the prophet bitterly complains of the wickedness of the people, and describes the evil consequences, viz. "the law is slacked, and judgment does *never go forth*," i. e. is not executed, does not triumph; "for the wicked does compass about the righteous; therefore *wrong* judgment proceedeth," i. e. prevails. Strange that a Hebrew scholar, like David Levi, should assert that the mere particle Lamed alone is sufficient to decide that it means *for*, when every Tyro in Hebrew knoweth that the primary use of the particle Lamed is to characterize the dative case *to* and *unto*; but is used only occasionally to denote *of* and *for*. Beside, I really can see no difference produced in the prediction of Isaiah, whether it be translated *for ever*, or *unto victory*. The meaning is precisely the same. Death is always represented as an enemy, the king of terror; but Messiah was promised to overcome death, put a stop to its power and tyranny, and completely triumph over it for ever.

cured pardon and acceptance with God, and a restoration from death, by a blessed resurrection, to the enjoyment of eternal life and glory in heaven. In the hope of that glory and immortality brought to light by the Gospel, the believer in Christ, even in the house of his pilgrimage, can sing the triumphant song, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15: 55-57. Farewell.

When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies
I bid farewell to every tear
And wipe my weeping eyes.

Should earth against my soul engage,
And hellish darts be hurl'd,
Then I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world.

Let cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall;
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heav'n, my all:

There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heav'nly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.

Letter XVII.**CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.**

Dear Benjamin,

We will now consider the evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus, arising from the predictions fulfilled at his crucifixion. The death of Christ is an event most singular, as well as most important. We have already seen, from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that the Messiah was to die a peculiar death, the death of an expiatory sacrifice; and that Jesus Christ died such a death. We shall now point out the predictions which relate to the peculiar *circumstances* of the sufferings, death and burial of the Messiah, and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ our Savior.

§ 1. That he was to suffer from the multitude, was particularly foretold by the royal Psalmist, and the princely prophet Isaiah. By the former the Messiah is introduced saying, "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him. Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me." Psalm, 22 : 6-8, 12, 13, 16. Isaiah having foretold the wonderful success the Gospel would have amongst the Gentiles, bitterly complains of the unbelief of our nation, and mentions the cause of their conduct, saying, "Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before

him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground : he has no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ; and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." ch. 53 : 1-3. Now all this has been literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ. During the whole of his public ministry he was slighted and disesteemed on account of his mean parentage and education, his outward poverty, and the meanness of his disciples and followers ; and when hanging on the cross, " bearing our sin in his own body on the tree," the mob mocked him in the very words mentioned by the Psalmist.

§ 2. The soldiers' conduct was not more cruel than agreeable to prophecy. The judge of Israel was to be smitten with a rod upon the cheek. Mica, 5 : 1. The declaration of the Messiah by the prophet, Jesus fulfilled, viz. " The Lord God has opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away my back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair ; I hid not my face from shame and spittings." Isa. 50 : 5, 6.

§ 3. The conduct of Messiah's professed friends, during his sufferings, as well as that of his enemies, was predicted by the prophets, and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. 1. By one of his disciples he was to be betrayed, and sold into the hands of his enemies. Of this treachery the Lord Jesus informed his disciples beforehand, to confirm them in their faith of the Messiahship. " I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen ; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he." John, 13 : 18, 19. This prediction is evidently taken from Ps. 41 : 9. " Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." I am aware, my dear Benjamin, that it has been objected that this Psalm is

inapplicable to the Messiah, because it is said in the 4th verse, "Lord, be merciful unto me, and heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee." But it may be answered, that in many cases two original Psalms have been joined into one; and it is more than probable that verse the 5th commenced a new Psalm. Beside, it may well be considered as the language of the Messiah, expressing his confidence in his Father's promise, to uphold him in his sufferings and death and to raise him again from the dead, because he had, in obedience to his will, died as a sin-offering; for the last clause of the verse, "Ki chatathi lach," may be read thus: "For I have made an atonement for sin unto thee." For you well know, my brother, that the word *chata* frequently, especially in Piail, signifies to expiate, atone, or make an offering for sin. See Lev. 5 : 7, 11; 6 : 26; 9 : 15. Ex. 29 : 36. Ps. 51 : 7. Hence the noun *chattath* is frequently used for a sin-offering. See Exod. 29 : 14. Lev. 4 : 3; 8 : 21, 24; 29 : 33, 34, particularly Isa. 53 : 10. Hence Jesus is said to be made *sin* for us, i. e. a sin-offering. 2 Cor. 5 : 21. Now, that Jesus was betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples, is not only mentioned by the evangelists, but also in the history of our Lord compiled by the Jews, called Toldoth Yeshu, p. 15 : 10.

§ 4. The conduct of this disciple was more clearly described by the prophet Zechariah, 11 : 12, 13. "And I said unto them, if ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." Now this prediction was literally fulfilled with respect to Jesus. For Judas having agreed with the chief priests to deliver Jesus into their hands for thirty pieces of silver, and having fulfilled his engagement, he received his wages. But his conscience afterward accusing him, he returned them the money, acknow-

ledging his guilt; but they not judging it lawful to put the money into the treasury, because it was the price of blood, bought the potter's field with it, as a burying-place for strangers. See Matt. 27 : 3-10.

§ 5. Another prediction, fulfilled during the sufferings of Messiah Jesus, relates to the conduct of his disciples. He was not only to be mocked by the multitude, and betrayed and sold by one of his disciples, but all the rest were to forsake him at that time. This was foretold by the prophet Zech. 13 : 7. "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts, smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Many of our Rabbins refer this prediction to the days of the Messiah, yea, to the Messiah himself. See Aben Ezra and Michlol Yophi in loco. And in that awful but all-memorable night in which Jesus was betrayed, he told his disciples that in that very night they would all forsake him, reminding them of this prediction, and it was verified by their conduct. Matt. 26 : 31, 56.

§ 6. We next consider the predictions which relate to the sufferings which Messiah was to endure from the hands of his own Father. I acknowledge, my dear Benjamin, that there is something inexpressibly awful and deeply mysterious in the idea that the Father should put his best beloved Son to any sufferings or pain; yet it was nevertheless foretold, and literally fulfilled in the immaculate Jesus, of whom the Father testified again and again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The royal Psalmist introduced the Messiah saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ps. 22 : 1. The prophet Isaiah not only declared repeatedly "that the Lord laid upon him our iniquities," i. e. dealt with him as we sinners deserved to be dealt with, but expressly declared, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief." Isa. 53 : 10. And Zechariah introduces Jehovah as giving the awful commission, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and

against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts ; smite the Shepherd," &c. Zech. 13 : 7. That these predictions had a reference to the Messiah, is acknowledged by our ancient Rabbins, as we have shown already ; and that they have been literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ, is abundantly evident from the history of his sufferings related by the evangelists who were eye witnesses. John, the beloved disciple, stood beneath the cross when Jesus exclaimed, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" Peter, James, and John witnessed his agonies in the garden of Gethsemane, where the Son of God lay prostrated on the ground, " like a worm, and no man," groaning, sighing, weeping, praying, and being in an agony, sweating as it were great drops of blood, and exclaiming, " My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death !" Here another prediction was fulfilled, which says, " when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," or, according to the original, " when his soul shall make an offering for sin." These sufferings may well be styled the soul of all his other sufferings. As they infinitely exceeded in degree, so likewise in the motive and design of the immediate agent. Whatever were the motives of our people that falsely accused him, of the judge that unjustly condemned him, of the soldiers that cruelly treated him, of his disciples, that either treacherously betrayed him, or unfaithfully denied him, or timorously forsook him ; yet we are sure, from the unerring word of God, (as has been shown in the letter on the covenant between the Father and Son) that the motive and design, both of the agent and the patient, in all these mysterious transactions, was, as declared by the multitude of the heavenly host, " Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." Luke, 2 : 13, 14. And O, my beloved Benjamin, my heart leaps for joy at the prospect of the time when the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured upon our dear people, and they shall look unto him whom they have pierced ; then will they adopt the language recorded in this

most remarkable prediction of the Messiah's sufferings, saying: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. 53: 4, 5. Oh! Lord, hasten it, for thy name's sake. Amen.

§ 7. From the sufferings of Christ we proceed to notice the predictions which relate to his death. That he was to die a judicial death, we have already seen and considered on the prediction of Daniel, 9: 24, where it is said, "Messiah shall be cut off" *Carath*, which relates to a judicial sentence. The same was declared by the prophet Isaiah, saying, "He was cut off out of the land of the living." Isa. 53: 8. This was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who was tried and condemned at Pilate's bar. In the same prediction the prophet Isaiah foretold the cruel and unjust treatment the Messiah was to meet with in withholding from him the privilege granted to every criminal. "He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation?" Isa. 53: 8; or rather, as translated by the learned bishop Lowth, "By an oppressive judgment he was taken off; and his *manner of life*, who would declare?" The word "generation" frequently means manner of life. Hence, said our Lord, when speaking of the *conduct* of the unjust steward, "the children of this world are in their generation," i. e. manner of transacting business, "wiser than the children of light." Now you know, my dear Benjamin, that it was a custom in Israel, that when a criminal was condemned to die, a crier was sent round the city, saying, "if any one knoweth any thing in favor of this person, let him come forward." Tract Sanhed. Surenhus, part 4, p. 233. This privilege was denied to Jesus; and no doubt, if, according to custom, the usual proclamation had been made, thousands and tens of thousands of the blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb, and the sick, whom he had cured, the dead whom he raised to

life, and the multitude whom he fed, all would have come forward and spoken in his favor, and interceded for his life ; and no doubt the majority would have prevailed. And it is more than probable that our Lord complained of this partial and unfair treatment, in his answer to the high priest, when he asked him of his disciples and doctrines, saying, "I spake openly in the world ; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me ? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them : behold, they know what I said." John, 18 : 20, 21. I am aware, my dear Benjamin, that our Rabbins tell us that the usual proclamation had been made for 40 days, but no defence could be found. But this is only one of their falsities, contrary to facts.

§ 8. We next observe the manner of Messiah's death, as foretold. This was to be crucifixion, the last we should have expected. No such death was appointed by the God of Israel. It was inflicted only among the Romans, and never inflicted on one free born, but only on slaves, and that only for the worst of crimes. Who should have expected that our people, notwithstanding their rooted hatred of a foreign yoke, would voluntarily acknowledge their subjection to the Romans, merely to be gratified with seeing the blessed Jesus die the most lingering, painful, and ignominious of all deaths ? But the Scriptures cannot be broken. For "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be *lifted* up ; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John, 3 : 14, 15. That the brazen serpent was not a mere remedy for our wounded forefathers, but an emblem of spiritual things, and a type of the Messiah, is acknowledged by our Rabbins. Philo makes it a symbol of fortitude and temperance, and the author of the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, calls it a sign of salvation. In Mish. Rosh Hashshuna, c. 16 : 6, it is asked, "Could the serpent kill or make alive ? But at the

time that Israel looked up, and served with their hearts their Father which is in heaven, they were healed; but if not, they were brought low." See Jer. Targum. Jonathan Ben Uziel saith, " And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it on a high place; and it was, when a serpent had bitten any man, and he looked to the serpent of brass, and directed his heart to the name of the (Memrah) word of the Lord, he lived." The *word* of the Lord is used in the place of Messiah. This healing is understood of the spiritual healing of the soul. " As soon as they said, we have sinned, immediately their iniquity was expiated; and they had the good news brought them of the healing of the soul; as it is written, make thee a *seraph*, and he does not say a serpent; and this is it: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live, through the healing of the soul." Zeror Hammor fol. 123 : 2. Hence they compare the Messiah to a serpent; " The Messiah shall come forth from Jesse's children's children, and his works shall be among you as a flying serpent." Targum on Isa. 14: 29. Hence we read of " the other serpent of life," and " the holy serpent." Zohar. Gen. f. 36 : 2. Tickune Zohar in Yezira, p. 134.

§ 10. You will further observe, my dear Benjamin, that it was predicted as well as typified that Messiah was to die the death of crucifixion. David, in the 22d Psalm, saith, in the name of the Messiah: " I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me." ver. 14-17. How striking the description of the nature and effects of crucifixion, and how remarkably fulfilled in the death of Jesus! By his hands and feet he was nailed to the cross, his

bones were distended and dislocated, and became visible, so that they might be counted. The intenseness of his sufferings dried up all the fluids, and brought on a thirst tormenting beyond description. In addition to these outward sufferings, there was a fire from above, to the burning heat of which Christ, our paschal lamb, was exposed, as it is written by the prophet: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them." Lamentations, ch. 1: 12, 13. Thus forsaken and stripped, naked and bleeding, the adorable Jesus was a spectacle to heaven and earth; the object of foolishness to the Greeks, and a stumbling-block to the Jews; but, blessed be God, the wisdom and power of God to all them that believe. Surely nothing is half so attracting and lovely as a believing view of Christ crucified. Multitudes, who, like Saul of Tarsus, before their conversion, did wish themselves accursed from Christ, i. e. would have nothing to do with him, did, after their conversion, like Paul, the apostle, exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. 6: 14. Thus the prediction of our blessed Savior which was fulfilled in the nature of his death, is also constantly fulfilling in reference to its happy effects. "And I," said he, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (This he said, signifying what death he should die.)" John, 12: 32, 33.

§ 11. The time of Messiah's death is the next part of our subject. We learn from the unerring word of God, that there is an appointed time to man upon the earth; that his days are determined, and his bounds appointed that he cannot pass. Job, 7: 1; 14: 5. This, my dear Benjamin, is equally true of the Messiah. The time of his death was appointed, as well as that for his birth. That the time of his birth was predicted, and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, has been proved

in former letters. With respect to the time of his death, I do indeed not recollect any express prediction; but it was eminently typified in the death of the paschal lamb, and fulfilled in a remarkable manner in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. As the passover lamb was to be slain on the 14th day of the first month, between the evenings, i. e. about 3 o'clock P. M. so did Christ die on the 14th day of the first month, about the 9th hour, i. e. 3 o'clock P. M. This is evident from the testimony of the four evangelists. I am aware that the subject has occasioned considerable controversy, and it would exceed the limits of this letter to remove the difficulties; I must therefore refer my dear Benjamin to my Essays on the Passover. I would only remark, that the Lord Jesus well knew the time of his death, and repeatedly told his disciples of it; and just before his death he said, "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son," John, 17 : 1. All the envy, malice, and stratagems of our nation could not take away his life. Often they sought to apprehend him, but he either passed through the midst of them unobserved, or the officers, struck with wonder and astonishment, instead of executing their commission, returned, and said, "Never man spake like this man." John, 7 : 46. Nor could all the persuasions and intreaties of his disciples keep him from going up to Jerusalem, to deliver himself up to be crucified, when the hour had arrived.

§ 12. I will close this letter by noticing the place of the Messiah's death. As the first sin was committed in the garden, so in the garden the Messiah suffered, to atone for sin; and as the sin-offering on the day of atonement was carried without the camp, and burned to ashes, so did Christ bear his cross without the gates of Jerusalem, to suffer the most painful, ignominious, lingering, and accursed death. May you and I, my dear Benjamin, never be ashamed to go forth unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach, to whom be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

Farewell.

Letter XVIII.**THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.**

Beloved Benjamin,

Having in the preceding letter considered a variety of predictions and types relative to the sufferings and death of the Messiah, literally fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, I will now notice some other predictions relative to some remarkable circumstances which attended the death and burial of Christ.

§ 1. Isaiah predicted that Messiah was "to be numbered with transgressors." Isa. 53 : 12. This was fulfilled in Jesus Christ; although he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners during the whole course of his life, yet in death he was numbered with transgressors. Not only condemned to die a death inflicted only for the worst of crimes, but crucified between two thieves, as if he had been the chief of sinners. O blessed Jesus, how great was thy condescension to die the most ignominious death, that the chief of sinners may live !

§ 2. It was the privilege of the soldiers who attended the execution of a criminal, to divide his garments. Hence we read that they took the garments of Jesus and divided them among themselves. But that which particularly deserves our notice is, that the upper garment, the vesture of Jesus, they did not divide, nor cut in pieces, but cast lots. Now the soldiers, doubtless, were actuated by pecuniary motives, for the coat being without seam, would have lost its value had it been cut in pieces and divided; but the providence of God watched over the prediction which is writ

ten in Ps. 22 : 18, saying : " They part my garments, and cast lots upon my vesture."

§ 3. We notice the prediction respecting Messiah's behavior under his afflictions, especially under his sufferings of death. The prophet Isaiah describes it thus : " He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." 53 : 7. Nothing can exceed the beauty and propriety of the images by which the Messiah's patience is here illustrated ; and yet as the shadow falls short of the substance, so fall these images infinitely short of the real temper and disposition of our blessed Lord during his sufferings and death. As a sheep, when the shearer is stripping it of its clothing, makes neither noise nor resistance ; and as a lamb sports about even while driving to the slaughter, yea, and licks the very hand that is lifted up to slay it ; so the adorable Jesus endured all his sufferings *willingly, silently, and perseveringly*. He not only willingly *undertook* the work of a Mediator, " saying, lo, I come ; I delight to do thy will, O my God ; yea, thy law is within my heart." But even when the hour and power of darkness had come, he did not draw back, but with great earnestness did he desire to eat the last passover with his disciples, and to be baptized or immersed in the ocean of God's wrath ; yea, he was greatly straitened till it should be accomplished. Well might the poet say,

" This was compassion like a God,
" That when the Savior knew
" The price of pardon was his blood,
" His pity ne'er withdrew."

" He opened not his mouth," either to murmur, complain, or find fault. The most eminent saints have opened their mouth in complaints both against God and man. The patriarch Jacob exclaimed, " All these things are against me ;" Job

"cursed the day of his birth;" Moses "spake unadvisedly with his lips;" Paul "reviled God's high priest." But Jesus was without spot or blemish; "who did no sin, neither, was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. 2: 22, 23. But I wish you, my dear Benjamin, to observe likewise, that the righteousness of Christ was not merely *negative*, as some people boast, "that they have done no harm;" but *positive*—he came to do good, even to his enemies. I now allude particularly to the last prediction of Isaiah, in that famous chapter to which I have already so often referred, viz.

§ 4. "He made intercession for transgressors." Jesus exemplified his precepts by practice. The heathen philosopher said, "revenge is sweet;" but Christ said, "to forgive is godlike." "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5: 44, 45. How strikingly did the dear Jesus illustrate this divine precept in the whole course of his life, till he bowed his head in death! When he came within sight of that city where he had met with so many insults, and where he knew they would speedily treat him most cruelly, and condemn him unjustly, instead of feeling or expressing any resentment, he *wept* over it, and most pathetically lamented the invincible obstinacy which would shortly involve it in utter ruin. And while he yet hanged on the cross, instead of accusing his murderers, he prayed for them, and ever pleaded their ignorance in extenuation of their guilt; saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Thus "he made intercession for transgressors." I shall name another circumstance, viz.

§ 5. The prediction which relates to their giving him gall and vinegar. Ps. 69 : 21. "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink." This prediction relates to two different events. The first was fulfilled, as described by Matt. 27 : 33, 34, about the 6th hour just before Christ was nailed to the cross : "And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall; and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink." The second part of the prediction was fulfilled about the 9th hour, just before Christ died; and is recorded by the four evangelists : "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar; and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." John, 19 : 28-30. You will observe, my dear Benjamin, that the first vinegar, which was mixed with gall, offered to Jesus, he refused to take; you know that it was a custom in Israel to give to criminals, just before they were put to any pains of death, a potion to benumb their feelings; this potion, says Maimonides, was prepared by the pious women, Sanhed. c. 13. But as Jesus came for the purpose of suffering death in all its bitterness, or as Beza expresses it, "Christ being about to drink the most bitter cup of his Father's wrath against our sins, refused this solace; being so mindful of his Father's command as to be unmindful of himself; and only solicitous at once to expiate our sins, even to his latest breath." But when Jesus had cried, "I thirst," they gave him pure vinegar, which was the common drink of the soldiers, and he took it, and thus finished the last prediction to be fulfilled, before he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

§ 6. Having briefly considered the predictions which were to be fulfilled in the sufferings and death of Messiah,

and shown their accomplishment in Jesus Christ, I will now proceed to point out some predictions which relate to the time between the death and the resurrection of Messiah. Although the Messiah was to suffer both in body and in soul, yet "not a bone of him was to be broken." This was both predicted and typified. In Ps. 34 : 20, it is said, "he keepeth all his bones ; not one of them is broken." Now, although it be true that God exercises a peculiar care over his people, yet they meet with such accidents as well as the wicked ; but it has been literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, in a remarkable manner. It was a law in Israel, expressly prohibiting the bodies of those who were hanged, to remain all night on the tree. Deut. 21 : 22. For this reason, as well as because the Sabbath was at hand, the Jews begged the favor of Pilate, that the legs of the three crucified persons might be broken, to hasten their death. Pilate consented, and gave the order they desired. But the soldiers appointed to execute it, perceiving that Jesus was dead already, did not take the trouble of breaking his legs. Now, whatever was the motive of the soldiers, the evangelist John, who was an eye witness, observes, "these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken." John, 19 : 36. This circumstance was also typified by the law, which prohibited the breaking of a bone in the passover lamb. Exod. 12 : 46. See my Essays on the Passover.

§ 7. We observe next, the prediction delivered by the prophet Zech. ch. 12 : 10, that Messiah should be *pierced*. "and I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications ; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him," or rather for *it*, i. e. the act of piercing him. This prediction also was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, but neither by himself, nor by any of his friends, but by one who could have no idea of making the event fulfilling the Scriptures ; but God knows how to

bring good out of evil. "One of the soldiers," more cruel than the rest, "with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water." John, 19 : 34. That our Rabbins referred this prediction to the Messiah, we have already seen; and as surely as the former part which relates to the Messiah has already been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, whose side was pierced, so in like manner shall the second part of the prediction be fulfilled in the conversion of our dear people, when the Messiah Jesus shall come a second time, to reign for a thousand years upon the earth. Great will then be their mourning, for having pierced him so long with their unbelief. But, "blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." For "in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Zech. 13 : 1.

§ 8. Permit me now, my dear Benjamin, to invite you to the solemn funeral of the Messiah. It was no less foretold that Messiah was to be buried, than that he was to die. David, speaking of the Messiah, saith, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope: for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," (or rather my body in the grave, as shall be shown in our next letter.) Ps. 16 : 9, 10. And in Psalm 22 : 15, he saith, "thou hast brought me into the dust of the earth." But the plainest prediction we have in Isaiah, 53 : 9, "And he made his grave with the wicked, and" or much rather *but* "with the rich in his death." The former circumstance was a part of Messiah's humiliation, connected with the 8th verse, "for the transgression of my people was he stricken;" but the second part, "but with the rich in his death," was an honorable testimony to the Messiah; and the reason follows, "because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Now all this was remarkably fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the true Messiah. From the account given by the four evangelists, it appears that among the disciples of

Jesus who beheld his execution, there was one named Joseph of Arimathea, a man remarkable for his birth, and fortune, and office. Though he was a member of the council who condemned Jesus, he did not join them in this unjust sentence. This man went unto Pilate, and begged that he might take away the body of Jesus, (because if no friend had obtained it, it would have been ignominiously cast out among the executed malefactors. See Mish. Sanhed. c. 6. § 5, 6. Maim. Hil. Sanhed. c. 14. § 9.) And when Pilate had ascertained for a certainty that Jesus was really dead, he gave the body to Joseph. In discharging this honorable duty, Joseph was assisted by another disciple, named Nicodemus, the ruler who formerly came to Jesus by night, for fear of the Jews. These two, taking down the naked body, wrapped it with the spices in the linen furnished by Joseph, then laid it in Joseph's sepulcher, which happened to be nigh the place of execution. On the next day the chief priests and Pharisees, remembering that Jesus had predicted his own resurrection more than once, came to the governor and informed him of it, begging that a guard might be ordered to the sepulcher, lest the disciples should carry his body away, and affirm that he was risen from the dead. Having obtained a guard of soldiers, the priests went with them, placed them in their post, and sealed the stone that was rolled to the door of the sepulcher, to hinder the guards from combining with the disciples in carrying on any fraud. Now, my dear Benjamin, I rejoice that I can appeal to you for the correctness of this statement, for you know that our Rabbins, both in the Talmud and elsewhere, have given the very same account, with the addition, "that whilst the guard of soldiers were asleep, the disciples came and stole the body of Jesus;" and which is believed by our people even to this day. That the soldiers did make such a report, is confirmed by the evangelists. But what evidence did they produce? None whatever. Why did they not prevent it? Because they were asleep. Was it not death to sleep whilst on

guard ? How came they not to be afraid of making such a statement ? The mystery is unravelled. The secret is revealed. They were instructed by the high priest what to say, secured from any ill consequences, and well rewarded for their services. Such, my dear Benjamin, was the character of these soldiers, by which the grave of the blessed Jesus was guarded. Well might the prophet say, "he made his grave with the wicked." But the Lord honored him, and raised up a rich man to own and honor him in death, or as the word may be rendered, "with the rich man was his *tomb*." Now surely this was the Lord's doing, for to all human appearance it was not very likely ; for not many rich, not many noble believed in him during his ministry ; how could it be expected that they would honor his body mangled on the ignominious tree. But the Scripture cannot be broken. Yea, another scripture was fulfilled, which says : "his rest shall be glorious." Isa. 11 : 10. This passage is translated in the vulgate, "*Erit sepulchrum ejus gloriosum*," i. e. his grave shall be glorious, and it is applied by our Rabbins to the Messiah. Abarbanel saith "that it may be expounded of the Messiah's honorable burial."

§ 10. I cannot close this first series of letters, my dear Benjamin, without beseeching you, most affectionately, to consider the many and various predictions which have been so literally and remarkably fulfilled in the history of Jesus Christ, and judge whether I should not have been guilty of sinning against the dearest light and strongest evidences, if I had not adopted the language of one of our brethren, who said, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth," and may the *Ruach Hackadesh*, the Holy Spirit, lead you to confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Amen.

Farewell.

P. S. My dear Benjamin, it was originally my intention to have continued our correspondence uninterruptedly, but Providence calls me from home for a *few months*, and if life and health be spared on my return, I will, without delay, forward to you the second series of letters, on the following most interesting and important subjects.

PART I.—The exaltation of the Messiah.

Subjects.—His resurrection from the dead—his ascension into heaven—his intercession in the most holy place—and his kingly office.

PART II.—Messiah was expected to be a divine person

Subjects.—The Trinity in unity—the angel Jehovah was a divine person—this angel was expected to be the Messiah.

PART III.—Jesus Christ is truly God.

Subjects.—He answers the character of the divine angel—he has all the distinguishing characteristics of Jehovah.

PART IV.—The importance of the divinity of Christ.

PART V.—The second advent of the Messiah.

Subjects.—The destruction of the *eastern* anti-christ—the return of the Jewish nation to their own land, in an unconverted state—Jerusalem and the temple rebuilt, and Judaism re-established—the converted Jews carried to Palestine—Jerusalem besieged by the *western* anti-christ—the *personal* appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ—the battle of Armageddon—the conversion of the Jewish nation—the *ten tribes* of Israel re-united with Judah—the first resurrection—Satan bound for a thousand years—and the *personal* reign of Christ upon the earth.

PART VI.—Messiah the Judge of the world.

Subjects.—The general resurrection—the judgment day—the felicity of heaven, and the torments of hell

PART VII.—Sermons on select and important subjects.

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